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THE ASCENT THROUGH CHRIST

"The hardest and most painful task of the student of to-day is to occidentalise and modernise the Asiatic modes of thought which have come down to us closely wedded to mediæval interpretations."

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

THE ASCENT THROUGH CHRIST

A STUDY OF THE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION IN THE LIGHT OF THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

By E. GRIFFITH-JONES, B.A

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TO

MY FATHER,

WHO, BY PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE, FIRST TAUGHT ME TO

THINK HONESTLY, FEARLESSLY, AND REVERENTLY

ON THE MYSTERIES OF THE FAITH,

AND TO

MY WIFE,

WHOSE LOVING SYMPATHY AND CONSTANT STIMULUS

HAVE SO GREATLY HELPED ME IN

THE COMPLETION OF MY TASK,

I GRATEFULLY DEDICATE

THIS VOLUME

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PREFACE

THIS work is not a treatise in Systematic Theology, nor yet an attempt to reconstruct the whole contents of the Christian Faith on an Evolutionary basis. It is, as the sub-title suggests, a study of certain spiritual facts, which cluster round the Mystery of Divine Redemption, viewed in the light of that great principle of Development which has taken possession of the mind of to-day, and which seems destined, in its broader aspects, permanently to affect human thought in all its departments. These facts are, Sin and its correlative theory of the Fall of Man; the Person of Christ, His atoning death and Resurrection, and the New Life in Him, which embodies the highest moral and spiritual evolution of human character, and which is the Christian's surest ground for believing in a blessed Immortality; together with such subsidiary problems as radiate from these "focal centres." This definitive statement as regards the purpose of this book will enable the reader to understand both the emphasis laid on certain parts of the

subject, and the many omissions which, in a more systematic treatise, would have seemed strange and unjustifiable.

Some years ago, the writer, finding himself seriously affected by the general unsettlement of religious thought resulting from the disturbing influence of the Theory of Evolution on all historic beliefs, determined to make an attempt to remodel the contents of his faith in accordance with such of its principles as seemed safely established. He was struck at the outset with the paucity of really helpful works on all but the very elements of the subject. Almost all the existing works on the relations between Christianity and Evolution—and their number even at that time was legion—dealt with *prolegomena*, and disappointingly stopped short just as the crucial difficulties of the situation became most insistent,—a disappointment all the keener in view of the thorough manner in which the preliminary questions were in many cases cleared up. Especially was this the case with the problem of Sin, which lies athwart the threshold of every system of Christian doctrine. How far had the new science of human origins swept away the immemorial belief in the Fall of Man? The new psychology, had it broken down the last remaining wall of partition between Man and Brute? Was it any longer permissible to believe in the inspiration of such "unscientific" conceptions of creation as are given in the first chapter of Genesis, and of such "idyllic myths" as the story of Eden in the second and third chapters? Was such a "Fall" as is there described consistent, even in a metaphorical

sense, with a frank acceptance of the doctrine of human development as it is now universally held among reputable anthropologists? Till such questions were cleared out of the way, it seemed useless to proceed to the consideration of doctrines depending logically on these regulative beliefs for their validity. Here then was ample room for investigation,—in truth an undiscovered country to be explored; and into it the writer plunged with all the ardour of youth at escaping from the "well-trimmed lawns" of the traditional faith, tempered with not a little trepidation at the possibilities of a shattered faith which might await him "in the tangle and the storm" ahead. To say that in the event he found himself emerging from the strenuous quest for a rehabilitated faith close to the point from which he started, but on higher ground and with an ampler and clearer outlook on both faith and life, is to put into a sentence the substantial message of this book.

There were certain first principles to be dealt with at the outset, necessitating a careful study of the philosophy of Evolution. Fortunately, there was abundance of help to this end to be gained from the copious literature already in existence on the bearings of the theory on the general principles of religious thought, and, in particular, on Man's place in the organic series. The result of much reading on these preliminary but essential questions is given in the Introduction, without a study of which (especially pp .26–39, and pp. 56–70) the subsequent developments of the argument may appear in some directions doubtful. The next step was to ascertain how far the idea of a spiritual lapse

or fall in the race was compatible with the supposed unbroken upward movement of Evolution; and here the writer was greatly astonished to find that, whereas most scientific thinkers altogether scouted such a possibility, they were all the time busily engaged in accumulating a vast array of facts in the fields of organic nature which went far, even apart from the testimony of history and conscience, to show the *a priori* reasonableness of the old belief. As this grew clear it seemed to the writer that a thorough treatment of the subject might be useful to others as well as to himself, and so by degrees the First Book took its present form and proportions. So far as he is aware, this is the first attempt to deal with the question of the Fall *per se* in its critical, psychological, and anthropological aspects. That the difficulties with which the subject teems have all been disposed of, it would doubtless be too much to expect; it is to be hoped at least that some useful material towards a restatement of the doctrine on a scientific basis has been brought together, so that the present mischievous hesitancy, manifest both in the pulpit and out of it, in dealing with the problem of individual and racial sin, may come to an end.

The first half of the volume is devoted to this, the great initial theological problem of all ages. Recent literature relating to the Incarnation and the Resurrection is so copious, and on the whole so satisfactory, that the writer has felt free to deal with these great facts with a lighter hand, only dwelling in any detail on such aspects as are more directly affected by the Evolutionary hypothesis. The Virgin-Birth of Jesus

is one of these, and therefore is treated with some thoroughness. In the Third Book, the problems of the Future of the Race, both in this life and in that which lies "behind the veil," are also carefully considered, inasmuch as on these points there is much distressful unsettlement of thought among even devout Christians. As regards the Atonement, the law of sacrifice has been enriched by innumerable illustrations drawn from the fields of organic evolution; and the function of Death in the animal creation, as a necessary condition of the emergence of life from lower to higher forms, gives a prophetic forecast of the deeper and higher Mystery in which the Son of God gives His life for the world. There is, of course, nothing ethical in the principle of "Selection by Death" which rules in the organic world; but it is a true premonition on its own plane of the spiritual "Redemption by Death" whereby the higher evolution of the Race has been secured to us through the Vicarious Sacrifice of our Lord on the Cross.

In a work embodying so much miscellaneous reading, it is very difficult to make adequate acknowledgment of one's indebtedness to others. Such particular acknowledgment as seemed possible is given in the form of references in the footnotes. The writer feels, however, that a special debt of gratitude is owing on his part (1) to Dr. Martineau, for his masterly treatment of the ultimate problems of Ethics and Natural Religion in his two great works on these subjects; (2) to Prof. Le Conte, for his fresh and ever-interesting (though incomplete) co-ordination of Evolution and Religious Thought; (3) to Dr. Fairbairn, for his profound and

stimulating works "Studies in the Life of Christ" and "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology"; (4) to Dr. Milligan, for many suggestions on the subject of the Resurrection, in his work on that topic; (5) to Canon Gore, for much help in dealing with various aspects of the Incarnation; (6) to Prof. Illingworth, for the stimulus derived from his masterly work on "Personality, Human and Divine"; and last, but by no means least, to Prof. W. N. Clarke, of Hamilton, N.Y., whose work entitled "An Outline of Christian Theology" is full of fresh suggestion and spiritual uplifting. My personal thanks are also due to my friends Mr. Arthur Porritt, for valuable literary advice in matters of detail; Mr. Jas. A. Craig, for his generosity in preparing the Index; and the Rev. H. H. Snell, for some acute criticisms regarding certain portions of the argument submitted to him in manuscript.

E. GRIFFITH-JONES.

The Parsonage,
Balham, S.W.
January, 1899.

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Introduction: Man's Place in Evolution

"A subtle chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings;
The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose;
And striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form."

EMERSON.

'Man is neither the master nor the slave of Nature; he is its interpreter and living word. Man consummates the universe, and gives a voice to the mute creation."
ED. QUINET.

INTRODUCTION
MAN'S PLACE IN EVOLUTION

Chapter I.—Some Modern Expansions

New Conceptions of the Universe as to Space, Time, and Origin—Subjective Influence of the New Ideas—Faith in the Christian Position disturbed—Readjustment necessary—The Nemesis of Insincerity.

I

THE great intellectual movement of modern times has resulted, among other issues, in three serious modifications of Man's conception of the Universe, and of himself.

1. In the first place, it has vastly enlarged his conception of Space. The Copernican Astronomy, the invention of the telescope and spectroscope, and the application of the higher mathematics to the problems of the stars, have so enriched our outlook of the physical heavens, that all Man's previous ideas of the limits of the Universe have melted away, and he finds himself positively unable to realise its vastness. It would not be too much to say that the vision of the starry heavens at which the psalmist gazed with such rapture long ago—"thick inlaid with patins of bright gold"—is to the immeasurable ranges of space that have since been opened to our view but as an antechamber to a palace. The stars he saw were only a handful of diamonds in comparison with the untold

worlds of light that flash on our startled eyes when our vision is enlarged by the telescope. Not only has the old conception of a solid sky studded with brilliants given place to the vision of a liquid expanse absolutely trackless and immeasurable, but the stars themselves have unfolded their secret majesty, and instead of proving to be tiny balls of light, have been resolved into galaxies of ordered worlds, in the midst of which our immense solar system is lost like a dewdrop on a landscape. Every step forward in astronomical science has increased this sense of amplitude, till the human imagination is quite powerless to take it in. If we think we have mastered the idea, it is only because we have practically ceased to think of it. Beyond the utmost reach of our imaginative grasp this vista of the physical universe stretches out on all hands ; and when we have allowed our minds to fly out along the pathways of light opened to our inspection every starry night till we can do no more, we are oppressed by the thought that even then we have scarcely begun to realise the scope of the stupendous vision. This enlargement of the old parochial astronomy into the splendid outlook of the present day, while it is really a triumph of human intellect, has had a serious effect on religious thought, and, by emphasising the limitations of our earthly habitation, has brought home to the human soul a crushing sense of its insignificance and mortality.

2. The second great discovery that has modified our conception of the Universe is its no less significant expansion in point of duration. A century ago the lines of research, historical and geological, converged to a point just six thousand years distant, and there terminated. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," "and all the host of them," and that beginning was so recent as to be spanned by the lives

of some two hundred generations of men. Through the necessities of a crudely literal theory of inspiration, it had been taken for granted that the Bible not only sanctioned but enforced such an inference. And so when Science began to study the rocks as intelligently as the stars, and by slow and convincing degrees proved that this calculation was ludicrously inadequate to the conditions of the case, another rude shock was given to the faith of multitudes, extremists being divided into two irreconcilable camps, the one bent on the defence of Scripture as an authentic record of the genesis of things, the other equally bent on asserting the rights of free inquiry, and the competency of scientific research alone to deal with such problems.

3. During the last half-century another crucial departure has been made by scientific thought, no less revolutionary as regards old-fashioned notions of the Universe. This revolution is in a manner a co-ordination of the other two, and was quite impossible till these had been accomplished. Given unlimited space and boundless time, a free platform was provided for a third inquiry. After *where*, and *when*, comes *how*. And thus, by slow degrees, with infinite pains and labours abundant on the part of a host of earnest and fearless thinkers, this huge and apparently confused round of things has been arranged in some kind of perspective. The vast courses of time, and the trackless fields of space, are no longer lost in a confused sense of mere magnitude and duration, in which there is no clear vision, no notion of far or near, no intelligible impression of order and sequence. Just as the vision of the starry heavens as a solid concave—in which sun and moon and planets, and the host of fixed stars, were (like the figures in a Chinese picture) all equally distant —has given place to a splendid perspective in space, so

the vision of the countless centuries of time has now been peopled with a splendid perspective of life. Some idea is given why time has been so long, as well as why space is so vast. The latter only extends the range of the ordered Universe, for nowhere is there a hint within the farthest limits of telescopic vision of any region "where the sentinels of order do not stand," and the spectrum reveals the same chemistry at work in the uttermost stars as on the earth on which we live. In the same manner time only gives the eternal Spirit an ampler opportunity in which to perfect His creative processes, and to lead His ever-developing creatures down "the ringing grooves of change" to a fairer goal at last. Nothing has ever opened to the mind of Man a more moving vision of the resources of the Eternal from whom all things and beings proceed, than this that has been revealed by the Evolutionary Theory. It brings Him before us no longer as resting in inglorious ease from the work of creation, but as ever drawing upon infinite stores of wisdom and power in the development of the possibilities of life as they climb up the hierarchies of existence. Setting aside the fact that some of the foremost advocates of the case for Evolution have based their scientific exposition on a philosophical theory of the unknowableness of God which is by no means essential to the validity of their scientific conclusions, we may safely say that nothing has so enriched our conception of the methods of God as this widening outlook on His creative methods, when viewed from a theistic standpoint. It brings us face to face for the first time in the history of thought with what has been aptly called the "dramatic complexity of Nature,"[1] and transforms what formerly could only be viewed as a vast agglomeration of more or less unrelated

[1] See Patrick Geddes' "Chapters in Modern Botany," p. 140.

"specimens," to be analysed in isolation, or at best grouped according to external principles, into a wonderful series of correlated facts that have infinite cross-relations as well, so that "what seemed a unit becomes a link, and what seemed a chain is but a thread in the labyrinthine web of Nature." Out of the impressive background of this physical drama there has of late years been emerging a still grander vision. Slowly the old idea has been recovered that there are influences at work higher than the dead forces of Nature; that the enormous activity of Nature has an ultimate purpose; that the climax of the drama is moral and spiritual; and that what had seemed to be but a confused clash of incident and adventure, is really a great cosmic preparation for the emergence and perfecting of *character* as the goal and consummation of all things.

4. Great as has been the revolution brought about by these successive expansions of thought in Man's outlook on the Universe, their subjective reaction on himself has been scarcely less revolutionary. Just as men whose income has been suddenly and rapidly increased find their wants increasing in corresponding ratio, till what they have been accustomed to consider wealth takes on the aspect of comparative poverty, so the sudden enrichment of the intellectual world has created a restless discontent with the narrow conceptions of a century ago. Corresponding with these illimitable ranges of space, these majestic aeons of time, these splendid orders and processions of life, old-established ideas of the Universe have shrunk to parochial proportions, and the human mind demands a system of thought that shall be cosmic in its sweep Whether the facts dealt with be physical, or ethical, or spiritual, there is a passionate cry for generalisations

that shall more truly represent the amplitude and momentum with which they crowd on the imagination. The old moulds of thought are too cramped for the fresh ideas; the new wine demands new bottles. The peril indeed is that the intellect should be touched by that "vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself," and succumb to the temptation to frame hasty categories which succeed in satisfying the intellect for the time only by ignoring essential facts, especially the facts which belong to the spiritual order. How true this is may be seen in the speedy manner in which certain portions of Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy are being superseded. The very wealth of ideas which has burst upon us calls for a reverent care in their assimilation, ere we can hope for an adequate treatment in their explanation. Excess of light becomes darkness till the vision has adapted itself to its radiance; and in the morning-glow of the new *Aufklärung* it is well to shade our eyes, that we may see the true perspective of this vaster Cosmos that has so rapidly burst on our view. There never was a time indeed in the history of thought when there was more need for a sane and balanced judgment, and a calm and cautious temper.

II

It cannot, however, be denied that, with a sure prospect of ultimate gain to human thought all along the line, the theory of Evolution, as well as the two other expansions of thought that have been touched upon, have had a tendency to disturb the balance of men's religious ideas in several directions. Postponing one or two of these for subsequent treatment, it would be well to deal here with the bearings of that theory on

Man's conception of himself as based on the Christian Revelation.

The close interdependence of Anthropological and Theological questions has been often pointed out. The old crude idea that religion and scientific thought have no point of contact, and therefore no line of possible conflict, breaks down utterly when the science in question is that which deals with Man's conception of himself. For what he thinks of himself will in the end control and condition his thoughts of everything in heaven as well as on earth. "A meagre anthropology has for its counterpart a meagre theology."[1] If we conceive of ourselves as the mere outcome of mechanical forces, if we give up the immemorial faith that there is in us a spark of Divine supernatural life, if we make up our minds that the elements of human personality are merely joined loosely together in a nexus that death must inevitably dissolve, it will sound the death-knell of belief in a Higher Being, and emasculate our religion of all objective meaning. Thought cannot rise higher than its source, and if our thought of ourselves is essentially mundane, the wings of our faith will never rise into the spacious realm of the Absolute, nor can it find its resting-place in God. It is therefore not too much to say that the whole future of theology depends on the adequacy of our anthropology. Our doctrine of Man will in the last resort mould our doctrine of God, and settle for us whether the Universe is to be for us a soulless cavern, or a temple in which we commune with our Father who is in heaven.

Now there is one direction in which Evolutionary Science seems to have perilously shaken the older anthropology, and with it some pivotal ideas in religion. It seems for the time to have dethroned Man as a being

[1] Principal Tulloch on "The Christian Doctrine of Sin," pp. 2, 3.

distinct from, and essentially higher in nature than, the brute creation around him. It seems to have shattered once and for all the validity of the Biblical story of his creation, his primal innocence, his Fall into a state of sin. In so doing the meaning of sin and depravity has been imperilled, by making them mere incidents in an upward march, instead of a lapse into an unnatural and deplorable condition of evil, out of which Man is powerless to rise without an accession of strength and redeeming grace from on high. It seems to have disturbed our faith in the story of Redemption unfolded with such slow and painful detail in the Old Testament, which blossoms into such matchless beauty in the New, by rendering the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ unintelligible and meaningless, because they involve a perplexing break in the order of life and history. It is with these aspects of Evolutionary Thought that we propose to deal in the present work. It appeals specially to those whose faith is disturbed in what may be called the focal doctrines of the Christian Faith, but who are still anxious above all things to regain that faith, if it be possible to do so without sacrificing the integrity of their thought. That this disturbance is a real and widespread fact even among devout and earnest minds is unquestionable, and its effects have penetrated far beyond the limits of the educated and thinking classes—just as the ground-swell on the ocean affects regions widely removed from the storm-centre. To restore spiritual confidence by readjusting the old faith to the new materials of knowledge, and to show that the present unrest "signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain,"[1] is a process imperatively called

[1] Heb. xii. 27.

for by the exigencies of the situation. To this task we desire humbly to devote ourselves, being deeply persuaded that by facing it courageously and carrying it through to the end, it is possible to arrive once more at a real harmony between faith and reason,

> "That mind and soul, according well,
> May make one music as before,
> But vaster."

III

THERE is one other preliminary thought we would touch upon before facing the actual problem before us. The process of readjustment in which we shall be engaged is looked at askance by two classes of people. There are those on the one side who have parted finally with the traditional faith of Christendom, who consider readjustment meaningless, since to their view it involves an alternative between a thoroughly discredited superstition on the one side and an irrefutable and unbending dictum of *non possumus* on the other. For them this book will have little interest; and it may as well be frankly stated at the beginning that it is not meant for them, since it deals with the problem from a standpoint which they are bound to question. On the other side there are those who hold it to be a kind of treason to a faith which they hold with unquestioning confidence to attempt to readjust it to the mere opinions of scientists who change their theories every year, and whose present views of Evolution may be refuted out of their own mouths to-morrow. The writer can ask nothing better from these than that they too should "pass by on the other side," for these chapters are not for them. He can only say that in his opinion there is ample room for the acceptance of the broad doctrine of

Evolution without in any way pledging ourselves to questionable results in matters of detail. It is clear to all who have gone deeply into the matter that the theory in its essentials has come to stay, though it will in the necessities of the case be subject to constant correction in regard to its subordinate aspects; equally clear is it that so all-embracing a generalisation must inevitably in the end affect every department of thought. As this belief is now shared implicitly if not openly by thousands of earnest and devoutly religious minds, who are deeply affected by the confident assertions of unbelieving evolutionists that Christianity has become an impossible creed, and who at the same time are fervently persuaded that that creed is in its fundamental doctrines true, it is in their interests to examine these doctrines in the light of the categories of the Evolutionary Philosophy. To deny the right of these thousands to the help they need, by bringing together the discordant elements of a faith that is in jeopardy, is to take up a position inconsistent with charity and Christian brotherhood, and to put a stumbling-block in the way of many an earnest seeker for the truth as it is in Jesus.

For the passion for the unification of knowledge, and the harmonising of truth with itself in all its departments, is not confined to the scientific thinker. It is an attribute of every man and woman of serious mind. We are compelled to have some working theory of the Universe, in accordance with which we carry on our mental processes, and refer the facts of experience to their supposed laws. Even when for any reason we decline to enter into the ultimate problems of mind and thought, and to carry them so far as we can to their solution, we unconsciously act on the basis of some implicit theory of the nature of Man, the World,

and God. Those who decline to reopen the great questions that meet them on all hands, and profess to leave their solution to such as have time and skill to deal with them, are not exempt from this necessity. For this attitude generally means that they prefer not to exchange an old point of view for a new one, or to enter upon an inquiry for which they feel no special competence, and which may lead to results fatal to their peace of mind. When this is done without any conscious sense of dislocation between theory and fact, no great harm ensues; so long as the moral sense is not pained by a feeling of unreality and inward schism, imperfect theories serve the practical needs of the spiritual life with tolerable efficiency; the mind may be cramped by having to live in a hut instead of a palace, but the soul can still make its escape to some quiet place where it may breathe its native air and worship under its own ample sky.

But when once the intellect is aware of a dividing-line between its affirmations and the faith on which the heart stays and feeds itself, it is at the peril of the soul that the call to deal truthfully with the problems that arise is stifled or neglected.[1] Unreality in matters intellectual speedily brings spiritual impotence in its train; the Nemesis of insincerity is a "creeping paralysis" of doubt. It is in vain that we endeavour to retain a

[1] The following passage from Theodore Munger's "Appeal to Life" puts this point in an effective manner:—

"There is a great deal of incipient infidelity that might be cured if it were properly dealt with. The limitations that make Theology an isolated science, and the common assertion that religion and science have nothing to do with each other, are the actual sources of this infidelity. We know ourselves too well to assent to the claim that we are compartment-beings, thought-tight, and can shut religion up in one part, and philosophy in another, and science in still another. When a truth enters into man it has the range of his whole nature, and makes its appeal to every faculty; if shut within the heart it will mount to the brain, or if held there it will

religious faith that is in felt discord with the facts of life. Faith and reason may in a sense occupy different spheres, but they intermingle in practical experience in the most intricate way; nor can they long exist out of relation to each other. Therefore there arises periodic need for such an attempt as is made in this book.

steal down to the heart. Man is the completest unit in nature. The divisions set up between mind and will and sensibility are like the great circles which astronomy puts in the heavens—imaginary, and for convenience only; if insisted on as real, they might check the planets in their orbits" (pp. 285, 286).

> *"It does not seem unwarranted or presumptuous to say, that as in Man the immanent intelligence transcends unspeakably the organism, so in Nature itself, the Immanent Intelligence, ever looking out upon us, giving us deeper insight into the meaning of the past ages, is also Transcendent, ever leading rational creatures into enlarged expectations."*
>
> CALDERWOOD.

Chapter II.—What is Evolution?

Old and New Ideas of Evolution—Le Conte's Definition—"Resident Forces"—The Continuity of Natural Law—Three "Breaks"—Where Christian Evolutionism and Materialistic Science part company—Factors of Evolution.

BACON tells us that Truth is more readily derived from error than from confusion. If so, there is no greater hindrance to the attainment of truth than the confusion that arises from a loose use of terms; and the first duty of those who would attain clear ideas is to define their terms carefully in starting, and then endeavour to be consistent in their use of them.

There are few terms so frequently on the lips of thoughtful men nowadays as this of *Evolution*. And yet it is by no means easy to define it; it is often loosely and inaccurately applied; and it bears so many significations in the mouths of different schools of thinkers, that it is hard to reduce it to its "lowest common denominator." This is partly because, in its scientific use, it is an old term adapted to new service, and, as often happens with such words, the old connotations often creep unawares into the new applications, to the great detriment and confusion of thought.

In its more general signification Evolution is by no

means a modern term. It is as old as philosophy itself, or at least as the early Greek physicists, such as Thales, Anaximenes, and (more definitely) Heraclitus, who distinctly taught the reality and progressiveness of motion, change, and generation. In one form or another the idea of Evolution has emerged in almost all the philosophical systems of subsequent ages. The great difference between the ancient and the modern theory is one of distinctness and method rather than of essence. In the ancient systems of thought the idea of Evolution was but crudely presented, without any adequate sense of its nature and limitations; the method was purely *a priori*; old-world philosophers argued mainly from principles to facts. The modern view, on the other hand, is based upon a clearer notion of the limits within which the conception must be restrained, and it has the incalculable advantage of being led to its conclusions along inductive lines of proof, *i.e.* it is *a posteriori* in its argument, and proceeds from facts to principles. Further, the great advances made in all the sciences, contributing as they have done on all hands to the general theory of Evolution,—which embraces them all,—has enabled its advocates to collect an immense amount of evidence of its truth, drawn from widely severed fields of research, and pressing with irresistible force towards one great conclusion.[1]

I

WHAT then are we to understand by Evolution?

Prof. Le Conte, in his suggestive work on "Evolution

[1] For a clear and masterly account of the theory of Evolution from a historical point of view, see Huxley's article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th Ed., *s.v.*

and Religious Thought," defines it as involving three root-principles.[1]

1. "It is a continuous progressive change."

This kind of change is described by Spencer as a movement from the simple to the complex, from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. The underlying idea is that the Universe, as we know it, is the result of a *becoming*, the higher and more complex forms of life following on and emerging out of the lower and more simple forms. So far, it is opposed to that idea of the Universe which regards it as having always been in its present condition from the beginning, or as the theatre of changes which have no particular and ascertainable relations to one another, or as teaching that the various types of living creatures have existed as they are at present from the time when God rested from His work and "saw that it was very good." It is also opposed to such an idea of it as would permit of spasmodic interferences with the genetic order of life, a superimposing on the races already existing other and higher races by sudden creative *fiat*. In other words, it precludes all notion of *unrelated* breaks and leaps in the ascending series of life, affirming that each new member in the series (speaking of species as well as individuals) is derived genetically from that immediately preceding it in the organic scale.

But even at the threshold of this definition we are met by the fact that serious doubt is beginning to be felt as to how far the word "continuous" may fairly be applied to the steps along which organic Evolution moves. It has, for instance, been taken for granted, without any adequate proof, that Variation (of which more presently) is indefinite, fortuitous, and "con-

[1] "Evolution in Relation to Religious Thought," 2nd Ed. (Chapman & Hall), p. 8.

tinuous" in the strictest sense; that species have arisen by steps so gradual as to be insensible; and that no teleological factor is to be recognised among the *verae causae* of Evolution. No real proof of these positions has been attempted by Darwin or his successors; they have been taken for granted, *a priori*. Darwin allowed no room for the study of the origin of variations. As a *methodological device* this was quite justifiable; every inquiry must begin somewhere, and Darwin chose to begin here. But a prior question is equally justifiable: *are these assumptions true?* A school of thinkers is now rising who not only doubt them, but meet one or all with a flat denial. Variation is *not* indefinite: it is at least hedged in by certain limitations—*e.g.* the nature of the substances that go to make up organic forms, the exterior laws of Nature such as gravitation, high and low temperatures, food supply, etc.; all of which go to determine "both what sort of variations can occur, and in what directions organisms can vary."[1] Now if Variation is not indefinite, it logically follows that it is not fortuitous, neither is it necessarily in the strict sense "continuous." And if Variation is *not* "continuous," this is a fact of immense significance in the study of Evolution, disposing as it does of the supposed necessity of finding missing links.

2. "Evolution is a continuous progressive change *according to certain laws*," of which the chief are the following:—

(*a*) *The law of Heredity*, according to which offspring tends to reproduce the essential characters,

[1] Prof. F. C. S. Schiller on "Darwinism and Design" in *Contemporary Review* for June 1897, p. 872. The whole article is very suggestive and damaging to the assumptions of the purely mechanical school of Evolution.

generic and specific, of its parents. This tendency is somewhat analogous to the first law of motion, according to which a body, once started in any direction, continues to move in that direction until retarded by outside forces. The vital energy stored up in the reproductive cells of living creatures tends to repeat their type from one generation to another. Our Lord gives the popular statement of this law in the words, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Like produces like. Were this not so there would be no order in the organic world; to all intents and purposes it would be a world of chance, of monstrosities, of hopeless and irredeemable confusion. As things are, we know that the offspring of all living creatures will, broadly speaking, resemble those from whom they have descended, and we may safely build our conclusions on this basis. The question of *how* this law works is not by any means so certain as the *fact* of its universal operation. There is no point on which scientists are so divided at the present moment as the laws of heredity; but they are all clear on the question of fact.

(*b*) The law of *Differentiation* or *Spontaneity.* This means that allied types as well as individuals tend, to some extent, to differ among themselves, while adhering in essential features to their distinctive *genera* and *species.* Thus while the offspring of the same parents are always sufficiently alike to be easily recognised as belonging to the same race, and generally to the same family, a more careful examination will prove that each individual possesses minute differences whereby it may be distinguished from all others. This introduces an important element of change into the vital series, for it is found that this law of spontaneity is curiously interwoven in its effects (though in a more or

less unstable manner) with the law of heredity. In the vast majority of cases any outstanding individual peculiarity is swamped by the more powerful action of heredity, and so dies out with the individual in which it is first manifested. Occasionally, however, the tendency to vary repeats itself in the offspring, and henceforth takes its place along with the accumulated forces of heredity to form a more or less important new departure. Thus, if the first-mentioned law is the guarantee of *order* in the organic world, the second is the guarantee of *progress*; for without it we should be in a world in which each generation was a monotonous *replica* of those that preceded it, and the opening drama of life would lead to no climax. As things are, we are in a Universe in which there is not only constant change, but perpetual growth and development. The question whether, by the persistence of striking individual differences, or the slow accumulation of such as are minor and unimportant continued through successive generations, the line separating distinct species is ever crossed, so bringing the orders of life into a genetic series, is that on which the new school of biologists, who affirm the mutability of species, parts from the old, who affirmed that species were all immutable. There are few if any reputable students of organic life who do not now hold firmly to the new view; and it has been confidently affirmed that it is as hopeless to expect the older view to be reinstated, as to look for the substitution of the Ptolemaic for the Copernican Astronomy.

(*c*) This brings us to the next law of Evolution. Through the accumulation and persistence from one generation to another of individual and specific variations which tend to the perfecting of the forms of life, so that they are in ampler and more delicate

harmony with their environment, a general law of progress comes into sight. It is called *the law of progress of the whole*, because it is not found that all the differences that appear in the individual tend necessarily to progress. Some do, and some do not. Certain of those that do tend in this direction are reproduced and preserved, so that in the long run a general development takes place in the broad march of life down the generations. Taking the illustration of a tree, Le Conte says: "It branches and rebranches continually by the law of differentiation—some branches going upward to a higher plane (progress); some pushing horizontally, neither rising nor falling, but only going farther away from the generalised origin (specialisation); some going downward (degeneration), anywhere, everywhere, for an unoccupied place in the economy of Nature; but the whole tree grows ever higher in its higher parts, grander in its proportions, and more complexly diversified in its structure."[1]

3. "Evolution is a continuous progressive change, according to certain laws, *by means of resident forces*."

It is here that we must show the greatest care in endeavouring to avoid confusion of thought, and consequent fallacies in our reasoning; for there are many thinkers, who have no manner of objection to the theory of Evolution so far as this exposition has gone, who rightly start off here into an attitude of uncompromising hostility. If, indeed, the phrase "resident forces" means what it is sometimes made to mean, we are left in the grip of an arid Materialism for our creed and consigned to a godless Universe for our home.

These "resident forces" include not only the vital energies within the organism, but also the cherishing energies of the environment without it. Not even an

[1] "Evolution and Religious Thought," p. 14.

egg, whose development is supposed to be perfectly typical of the process of Evolution in the Universe,[1] quickens without the stimulus of heat from outside itself. It is clear, therefore, that all turns on the conception we form of the term "resident forces." Are they to be regarded as purely mechanical? If so, we decline to believe that they can be sufficient for the production of conscious and intelligent beings like ourselves; otherwise, Man is a greater mystery to himself than ever he was in days of old.

If, however, the term be enlarged so as to include the idea of God, without identifying Him with the physical order in and through which Evolution takes place, then no religious believer can object to the term "Evolution by means of resident forces"; if, on the other hand, God is identified with and limited by Nature, and the spiritual is viewed as conditioned by the physical, we are driven to a theory that is destructive of true Theism, and indeed of all Religion worthy of the name. And that some of the foremost advocates of Evolution do hold and teach such a doctrine, or one that is indistinguishable from it in its practical results, is undeniable. Mr. Herbert Spencer, it is true, is most emphatic in positing a Primal Mystery which lies behind phenomena, but as he teaches us that we do not come into intelligible relations with this Unknowable Something except through the objective phenomena of the Universe, the practical distinction between this theory and Pantheism is not easy to realise. Such a doctrine in effect denies the elements that make Religion a reality and a solace, without giving anything in return for what it takes away. The religious thinker affirms the possibility of correspondence between Man and his Maker; Mr. Spencer denies this, and says that such

[1] "Evolution and Religious Thought," p. 1.

a notion is a pure illusion, derived from primeval dreams and a savage belief in ghosts. The religious thinker finds it necessary to posit the existence of an Eternal Reason and Will in order to be able to understand the facts of the visible Universe; Mr. Spencer, in effect if not in so many terms, tells us bluntly, and without any qualification, "Give me matter and a little motion, and I will construct the Universe for you"—*i.e.* through the action of unreasoning forces. The religious thinker, believing in the existence of a foreordaining Mind as well as an omnipotent Power, finds no contradiction in the ideas of Special Revelation, Incarnation, and Miracles; Mr. Spencer considers these "unthinkable," and is bound by the exigencies of his theory to account for all alleged miracles on "naturalistic" grounds. And so we might go on to show how on this one point the whole controversy between the religious and non-religious Evolutionist turns.

In fact the term "resident forces" must be understood as including, or at least as compatible with the existence of a Higher Power, which is in intimate relation with the Universe, but in no sense of the word identical with the totality of physical and mental phenomena. As a writer in the *Spectator* (for June 19, 1886, p. 820) aptly put it: "It is well to recognise this fundamental difference,—the Old Faith can live with anything which does not identify God with the World. It can afford to look with kindly interest on all attempts to make the growth of things more intelligible. It is not concerned how much time is taken in the process, nor how slowly the changes may have been effected. But it cannot live with anything which will not permit us to hold that the Creator has a life apart from the creation, that cannot allow that He may enter into new relations with His creatures, and that He can be known by

them. . . . It can live with Evolution, but not with the Evolution of Mr. Spencer, nor is it necessary that it should."

It is some relief to find that Evolutionists almost equally distinguished with Mr. Spencer, and as far removed from a "blind" attachment to the traditional faith, freely concede that Evolution does not touch the question of Theism, which, as they rightly affirm, lies beyond the province of the strict scientist. Mr. Huxley in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says: "Evolution has no more to do with Theism than the first book of Euclid has. . . . The evolution of a chicken from a microscopic cellular germ undoubtedly goes on every day. Therefore, to borrow an argument from Butler, this must be consistent with the attributes of Deity, if such a Being exists; and, if so, the evolution of the Universe, which is neither more nor less explicable than that of the chicken, must also be consistent with those attributes."[1] All that the Evolutionist desires and must have conceded to him is the fact that "the forces or causes of Evolution are *natural*; that they reside in the thing developing and in the reacting environment"; and as to the word "resident," all he means is that "these forces are resident in the same sense as all natural forces are resident."[2]

The "Continuity of Nature" is another ambiguous term the meaning of which it is needful to safeguard. By some writers it is taken to imply not only an unbroken sequence in the physical and mental worlds, but that the physical contains within itself *all the antecedents* of the mental, which is a very different thing. On the other hand, some of the most thoroughgoing Evolutionists, such as Alfred Russel Wallace, distinctly

[1] Article "Evolution."
[2] Le Conte, "Evolution and Religious Thought," p. 28.

repudiate this latter notion, and affirm that, *e.g.*, "because Man's physical structure has been developed from an animal form, it does not necessarily follow that his mental nature, even though developed *pari passu* with it, has been developed by the same causes only." That is to say, it is compatible with the Evolutionist Theory to believe that alongside with an unbroken chain of physical causes there may be at times an influx of other causes of another kind, which enter into and thenceforth combine with the physical for the production of complex results for which physical forces alone would not be sufficient. These higher causes, of course, must come from the environment, in which they have been so far quiescent, or acting in an independent and distinct series, and in a manner possibly beyond our observation. The moment comes when, like two streams joining to form one larger current, a physical and a mental series are united in a most subtle and inexplicable way. In such a case it is only a superficial observer who would affirm, either that the resultant current is causally to be deduced from *one* of the series, especially the higher from the lower, or that there has been a breach of continuity in the process before and after the union took place. As a matter of fact, there would be no lack whatever of continuity, but only an intermingling of causes and effects on one and the same plane which previously had been moving on different planes. Each series would still follow out its own destiny, though henceforth it would also act and be reacted upon by the other, the moment of union being a point of departure for a process in which the several factors co-ordinate in the production of a third line of development. In this each factor would have its own share of work to do,

[1] "Darwinism," p. 463.

but it would not be alone sufficient to account for the entire result. The sum of consequents in any causal series can be accounted for only when the sum of their antecedents has been enumerated; and these antecedents can only be understood in the light of their consequents.

II

If we bear in mind what has just been said, a flood of light is poured on the so-called "breaks" of continuity in the natural order. There are at least three such "breaks," whose existence no one denies, but whose significance many physicists are constantly attempting to minimise, because they go on the assumption that we must resolve all mental consequents into material antecedents. Let us first ascertain what these "breaks" are, and then show how they are to be regarded from the standpoint of theistic Evolution.

1. The first of these occurred with the appearance of life on our planet. This has long been a favourite battle-ground between religious and scientific thinkers. The former have found distinct evidence of the personal agency of God in the first dawn of vital processes; some of the latter have attempted to account for these processes by "spontaneous generation," while others, though clinging to the theory *omne vivum e vivo*, have declined to think of life as a distinct emanation of Divine power. As a matter of fact, the theory of Biogenesis (so far as the evidence goes) unquestionably holds the field at the present moment. Science can give no account of the phenomenon of life. She can chemically analyse its simplest forms into their physical elements, and express the result in a formula; but experimentally no one has ever detected even the faintest approach to "spontaneous generation" in Nature.

This fact, it is true, cannot be said to settle the question finally in favour of the doctrine of Biogenesis. For, as Le Conte says, "the conditions necessary for so extraordinary a change could hardly be expected to occur but once in the history of the earth. Therefore, the impossibility of the derivation of live from non-life *now*, is no more an argument against such a derivation *once*, than is the hopelessness of a worm becoming a vertebrate *now*, an argument against the derivative origin of vertebrates."[1] It is perfectly consistent therefore on general grounds to hold the theory of *Abiogenesis*, even though no particle of experimental evidence were ever advanced of the fact of "spontaneous generation." Neither theory invalidates the facts that life is a unique phenomenon, absolutely distinct from non-vital phenomena,[2] and that it had its historical beginning at some point of time far subsequent to the emergence of the physical order. A moment came in the relations of certain chemical compounds with their environment when non-vital matter was transformed into matter endowed with the marvellous quality of life. Whether this came about through a direct act on the part of the creative Spirit, without the mediation of secondary causes, or by virtue of such mediation, makes no difference to the Divine character of the event, except to

[1] "Evolution and Religious Thought," pp. 15, 16.

[2] The following passage represents the latest position of the biologist on this point:—

"When all these admissions are made, and when the conserving action of natural selection is in the fullest degree recognised, we cannot close our eyes to two facts: first, that we are utterly ignorant of the manner in which the idioplasm of the germ-cell can so respond to the play of physical forces upon it as to call forth an adaptive variation; and second, that the study of the cell has on the whole seemed to widen rather than to narrow the enormous gap that separates even the lowest forms of life from the inorganic world" (Wilson, "The Cell in Development and Inheritance," p. 330).

those who believe that nothing can be Divine which is wrought through secondary means—a relic of the Deistic position, to state which is hopelessly to discredit it.

2. Another so-called "break" took place when the *organic* became the *sentient*. This change, which is confused by Mr. Wallace with the third and far the most important and incomprehensible of all,[1] took place with the first faint beginnings of sensation, or organic feeling. Since some of the earliest forms of life still survive, it is possible in a sense to observe this process experimentally, and to note how it grows from little to more as we pass upward along the ascending scale of life. There are organisms on the borderland between the conscious and the unconscious; we can hardly tell whether some of them are animals or plants: some plants, indeed, seem to possess a certain dull sense of feeling; and some animals are so lethargic that it is scarcely possible to detect the faintest sign of conscious response to stimulus. The physical condition of a capacity for sensation is the possession of a nervous system. As it is impossible with our imperfect organs of observation, even when reinforced by the finest instruments, to tell exactly where the first rudiments of a nervous system lie rooted in Nature, we cannot put our fingers on the exact spot in the organic world where Mind becomes first organically associated with Matter. But we do know that that spot is the point of departure for one of the most astonishing developments in the Universe, and we know that no mere changes in the disposition and elaboration of organic matter will account for the change. The two streams of mental and organic life coalesce somewhere, and begin that marvellous twinship which ends only at death; but it is certain that

[1] "Darwinism," p. 475, where sentiency and self-consciousness are treated as though they were indistinguishable.

neither is the cause of the other. They join, they react on each other profoundly, and they finally separate again: this we know takes place in the history of each living creature; but we can no more affirm that organised matter as such contains the potentiality of mental life when we see the two thus associated because it appears antecedently in the order of time, than we can affirm that the individual mind or "soul"—as Plato taught—"*makes*" the organism in which for the brief period of its earthly existence it is enshrined. There is no union in Nature more intimate and complete than this between sentient beings and their physical organism, and no union that has been more gradually consummated; but mind and matter are as distinct as ever, nor has any thinker, in attempting to express one in terms of the other, done more than confuse incompatible issues and cloud an impossible process in a mist of words.

Let us pursue this matter a little further. The correlation of mind and brain is such that consciousness in the ordinary sense only seems to accompany the higher brain-functions. It takes place only when the nerve-currents pass through the upper arches of the brain—that portion called the cerebrum. The cerebellum, the *medulla oblongata*, and the spinal cord carry on the instinctive and automatic functions of the body without any accompanying consciousness. But when purposive actions are performed, when effort is put forth with a view to an unwonted or progressive movement, the nerve-currents take a wider sweep, the higher cells and filaments of the brain are brought into play, and consciousness takes place. When such efforts and actions have been gone through a sufficient number of times, these higher cells again become quiescent, and habitual movements lapse into the care of the lower

cells whose workings are unaccompanied by any conscious sensation or feeling, though, by another effort, it is almost always possible to recover these sensations. Thus "consciousness and unconsciousness wait on each other, neither capable of working alone, but both together constituting the unit of progressive life."[1] This looks as though conscious feeling were an attribute of a certain kind of highly organised cerebral matter. So closely does the action of the *cerebrum* co-ordinate with this mental fact that it is impossible to dissociate them. For this reason it is often stated, and oftener still is it implied, that mental action in animals and man is a "function" of the higher brain. And yet the passage from the one fact to the other is absolutely unthinkable. Motion, whether in the brain or elsewhere, "can only produce motion, or transform itself into potential energy. Potential energy can only produce motion, maintain statical equilibrium, push, or pull. The sum-total of energy remains constantly the same. More or less than is determined by this law cannot happen in the material Universe; the material cause expends itself entirely in mechanical operations. Thus the intellectual occurrences which accompany the material occurrences in the brain are without an adequate cause as contemplated by our understanding. They stand outside the law of causality, and therefore are as incomprehensible as a *mobile perpetuum* would be."[2] So writes the eminent physicist Du Bois-Reymond in dealing with this fact, and he sums up his position by

[1] "Our Heredity from God," by E. P. Powell, 4th Edition (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1895).

[2] "Ueber die Grenzen des Naturerkennens," s. 36 (quoted in "Natural Theology and Modern Thought," by J. H. Kennedy, B.D., p. 49). Here is another striking statement of the same fact: "We do not need to picture to ourselves Watt thinking out his parallelogram, or Shakespeare, Raphael, and Mozart occupied with the most wonderful of their creations, in order to have an instance of an

warning his readers against confounding the proposition "consciousness is bound up with material conditions" with the totally distinct proposition "consciousness can be mechanically explained."

Mr. John Fiske, the well-known American philosopher, is equally explicit on this point. He writes: "The primal origin of consciousness" (by this meaning that form of it which is common to man and the brute, *i.e.* sentiency) "is hidden in the depth of a bygone eternity. That it cannot possibly be the product of any cunning arrangement of material particles is demonstrated beyond peradventure by what we know of the correlation of physical forces. The Platonic view of the soul, as a spiritual substance, an effluence from the Godhead, which under certain circumstances becomes incarnated in perishable forms of matter, is doubtless the view most consonant with the present state of our knowledge. Yet while we know not the primal origin of the soul, we have learnt something of the conditions under which it becomes incarnate in material forms."[1] In other words from the same author: "Of the origin of mind we can give no account, but only a historical one. We can say *when* (*i.e.* in connection with what material circumstances) mind came upon the scene of Evolution; but we can neither say *whence*, nor *how*, nor *why*."[2] Or again: "The assertion of the Evolutionist includes no hypothesis whatever as to the ultimate origin of consciousness; least of all that consciousness was

intellectual process which is incapable of being explained by means of its material conditions. . . . With the first feeling of pleasure or pain which some creature of the simplest organisation experienced at the commencement of animal life on earth, or with the first perception of a quality, that impassable gulf is fixed, which has now become doubly incomprehensible" (*ibid.*, p. 28: see Kennedy, p. 48).

[1] "Man's Destiny," etc., pp. 42, 43.

[2] "Darwinism," etc., p. 69.

evolved from matter. It is not only inconceivable *how* mind should have been produced from matter, but it is inconceivable *that* it should have been produced from matter."[1] And even with regard to the suggestion which has been thrown out as a compromise in place of a purely material explanation of the facts of mind, "that matter possessed already the attributes of mind in embryo," Mr. Fiske replies that "it is an alternative which it is difficult to invest with any meaning." The circuit of continuity in the physical accompaniments of thought is absolutely complete without reference to the consciousness that accompanies (but is not for that reason "caused by") certain "nerve-undulations" under appropriate conditions. Nowhere is there the slightest approach to such a process as a transmutation of motion into feeling or of feeling into motion.

3. The third and crowning "break" takes place when the "sentient" becomes the "self-conscious." This is the dividing-line between human and animal mental life, and marks a gap as "unthinkable" as the passage from matter to mind, and *vice versa.* We shall deal with this matter when we come to the specific contents of human personality a little later on.

Now these "breaks" are none the less significant because their coming has been so quiet and imperceptible. It is not only the "kingdom of heaven" that cometh "without observation"; it is the characteristic of every new order or kingdom that it should come in the same way. When a fresh factor takes its place in the developing order of life, or is evolved out of a previously implicit condition, it is not manifested by any rush of power that disturbs the balance of those already in activity, but comes in a leavenlike manner, being generally so stealthy in its operation that for some

[1] "Darwinism," etc., p. 68.

time it scarcely betrays its presence at all. In this indeed there is a serious danger to exact thought; for those who are anxious to show that matter contains the potentialities of all, even the highest, forms of mental activity take advantage of the subtle way in which any new departure occurs, and resolve its faint manifestations into the action of its physical "antecedents" in a manner that would at once strike us with absurdity if it appeared in its fulness suddenly and without gradation. But if a difference in kind appears at all, it matters not whether it is quantitatively large or not,—it is none the less a *qualitative* difference, and cannot be resolved, in germ any more than in fulness, into that which is essentially other than itself.[1]

There can be no controversy as to the reality of these "new departures" in Nature. They are facts

[1] In spite of the demonstrable character of this distinction, much confusion of thought arises from its neglect. Even so clear-headed a thinker as Mr. Fiske, while allowing that the difference between Man and the brute creation is so great that no mere natural selection of psychical qualities can account for it, says "that difference is unquestionably one of kind, but in saying this we must guard against misunderstanding. Not only in the world of organic life, but through the known Universe, the doctrine of Evolution regards differences in kind as due to the gradual accumulation of differences in degree. To cite a very simple case, what can be more striking than the difference between a nebula, a sun, a planet like the earth, and a planet like the moon? Yet these things are simply examples of cosmical matter at various stages of cooling" ("Man's Destiny," etc., pp. 34, 35). The difference between the four forms of matter mentioned above is in no real sense a difference *in kind* as the word applies to the problem which is here being illustrated. A sun, a planet, a moon, are only more or less developed forms of the primal star-mist of which the nebula is the best existing instance: on this point there is absolutely no controversy. Consequently the illustration does not in the slightest degree serve to show how it is possible for an accumulation of differences in degree to become at last differences in kind; indeed it rather serves to show how marvellously wide differences in degree can be, without producing the faintest tendency to bridge over the chasm between degree and kind, when these words are used to denote such differences as exist between matter and mind, physical and spiritual, dead and living matter, sentient and self-conscious beings.

that cannot be resolved into one another, nor expressed in terms of one another. Closely interwoven as they are in their processes, they are yet absolutely distinct in their essence. In what sense may we then speak of the "continuity of Nature"? Not, certainly, by attempting to reduce the higher of these orders of fact into the lower; but by positing a deeper and more ultimate Unity out of which both orders spring. This Unity must be conceived of not as a bald and formless entity, but as unimaginably rich and potent; not as limited by the categories and antinomies of human thought, nor yet as altogether above our apprehension, but as Someone with whom we come into real relations through the phenomena of the Universe, while at the same time He outsoars our highest conception and ideal of Him. When once we have been emancipated from the trammels of the theory that the continuity of Nature must be sought for in the totality of physical and mental phenomena, viewed either in serial or correlated order, and come to the acknowledgment of this deep and inmost unity of Nature in God, we shall escape from the conundrums of the Agnostic and the self-contradictions of the Materialist. And we shall find it possible to give the heartiest acceptance to the conclusions of science, while finding an ever larger scope for the faculties of faith and trust and reverence. Nature no longer is a "charnel-house and a grave, but Godlike and my Father's."

III

THE real question at issue, therefore, between Christian and non-Christian Evolutionists concerns not merely our conception of Nature, but also, in a very radical way, our conception of God, and of His relation

to the Universe. It is no part of our purpose here to prove the existence of the Universal Mind and Will; to establish the competency of our faculties to know Him with a real knowledge so far as it goes, however imperfect it may be; or to demonstrate His exact relations to the operative causes at work in the Universe. For the solution of these questions there is an abundance of able and convincing treatises. But it is necessary to point out that these questions must be fairly faced and settled before we can thread the mazes of subsequent problems. We must be content here to state that the theologic attitude most likely to bear fruit is one that combines the Transcendental with the Immanent conceptions of God. This is unquestionably both the Old Testament and the New Testament view, and it is becoming growingly clear that no other view can meet the conditions of present-day thought. God is immanent, but is not limited by Nature; He is transcendent, but is not separated from all or any natural processes. He works by means, but He is not the slave of the means by which He works. Even though it be proved that there is no flaw or break in the line of causation that runs through Nature, that would not banish God from the Universe in which He energises; it would only show the reasonableness and self-consistency of His methods. Miracles, on this view, are not unrelated or arbitrary occurrences; they are extraordinary events in which the physical is specially reinforced or controlled by the spiritual; and so far from spelling "monster," as Emerson[1] once put it, they simply bear witness to some otherwise unknown or unrecognised aspect of the Divine character: they are God "immanent" shedding a more clear and illuminating light on God "transcendent." To

[1] In his "Divinity Address."

attain to this view of God is to be freed from the extravagances of both Deism and of Pantheism, while retaining all that is precious in both. We are emancipated on the one hand from that debasing conception of the Divine Being which hermetically seals Him within the tomb of the physical order; and on the other hand we escape from the bald and paralysing conception of the world as a dead and soulless machine, set going by the great Artificer at the beginning, and only interfered with since at periods of great cataclysm and catastrophe. The ordinary processes of Nature bear witness to the Divine glory and faithfulness, for they are all the working of His will—all, that is, except sin and its consequences. And those extraordinary events of history that are called miraculous are but the evidences of His special interest in, and love for, the human race, which is the crown and apex of Nature's progressive strivings hitherto, and the starting-point of still higher developments, rising from the physical into the spiritual, and out of Time into Eternity. "God in all" and "God over all" are the two aspects of His activity which, when wedded into a single rich and pregnant conception of His relation to the Universe and to Man, enable us to look at Nature with holiest reverence as the "garment we see Him by"; at the Environment of Nature—the spiritual world—as the source of her order and beauty; and at Man as the child of God as well as the creature of the dust and the day. Whether we look beneath us, or around us, or above us, therefore, we are inspired by the Christian conception of God to a nobler, truer, more adequate attitude towards all things, and are fitted thereby to live a worthier life here and to prepare for a grander destiny hereafter.[1]

[1] "If Pantheism affirms the absolute immanence of God in the world, and Deism His absolute transcendence over it, Christianity

It is, in a word, through a more adequate doctrine of Causation that we are to escape the pitfall into which the earliest Evolutionists fell, and out of which their successors are just escaping. By denying or ignoring Metaphysics, they were forced to commit the radical sin of the physicist—that of endeavouring to account for the higher in terms of the lower—and to express the functions of life and consciousness, and even of self-consciousness, in the language of matter and force. In a passionate craving for a unity that shall comprehend all phenomena in one vast category, and that a category of physics, they were led by the assumption that matter contains all the potencies of the universe into an attempt to translate the higher manifestations of the Divine activity into the terms of materialistic science. In so doing, they banished God from their thoughts, though not out of His creation. They examined the machine, and because every part holds together firmly, and its work is done without flaw or friction, they denied that it ever had a designer; they

unites the two sides of the truth in a higher concept, maintaining at the same time the Divine immanence and the Divine transcendence" (Prof. James Orr, "The Christian View of God and of the World," p. 14). Prof. Flint, in "Antitheistic Theories," after describing how Deism "not only distinguishes God from the world, but separates and excludes Him from the world," and how Pantheism reduces God to an "abstract conception of power without efficiency," and Nature to a "shadow which is cast by no reality," goes on to say: "Theism takes an intermediate view. It maintains with Deism that God is a personal Being, who created the world freely and intelligently, and is above it and independent of it; but it maintains also with Pantheism that He is everywhere present and active in the world, 'upholding all things by the word of His power,' and so inspiring and working in them, that in Him they 'live and move and have their being.' It contradicts Deism in so far as that system represents the Universe as independent of God, and Pantheism in so far as it represents God as dependent on the Universe. It excludes what is erroneous and retains what is correct in both Deism and Pantheism. It is thus at once the pure truth and the whole truth" (pp. 339, 340).

went into ecstasies over the picture, and because the pigments melt into each other with exquisite grace, and the Artist is invisible, they denied that He exists; they took to pieces the mechanism of life and thought, and because they could weigh and measure what was left, they triumphantly claimed to have accounted for what had vanished as well as for what remained. As a matter of fact, they *accounted* for nothing; and when they had reduced life, thought, and spirit into the movements of the cells that accompany their activities, and expressed all in a chemical formula, that formula still contained all the mystery which they claimed to have eradicated from the universe. The higher can never be accounted for in terms of the lower. We must begin at the other end. The constituent elements of a group of causes can only be recognised in view of their total effects; if indeed the cause accounts for the effect, it is the effect alone that can explain and render intelligible the cause. And for this, if for no other reason, we must postulate spirit before matter, God before the universe, ere we can hope to escape the confusion and self-contradictoriness of much that goes by the name of "modern science." The endeavour to reverse the process has been none the less successful because some of the most gigantic minds have been engaged in it: it has only proved the futility of the method in a more impressive manner. Every Tower of Babel must end in a confusion of tongues; and the muddle of ideas as well as speech, resulting from the inversion of the true method of explaining Nature, which has been the bane of the last half-century, has been due to the fruitless effort to build a system of science that shall account for spirit, out of materials that will not even account for matter. Truly "the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth" still "for

the revealing of the sons of God"; nor will the final explanation of the universe be attained till it is viewed from above, from the heights of God, and not from beneath, from the plains of Shinar. We still look, with Emerson, for "the new Teacher, that shall follow so far those shining laws, that he shall see them come full circle; shall see their rounding, complete grace; shall see the world to be the mirror of the soul; shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart; and shall show that the Ought, that Duty, is one with Science, with Beauty, and with Joy."[1] Till that Teacher comes we must struggle with the problem as we may, endeavouring at least to avoid the root-fallacy of burrowing "in the dust" for what can only be found "beyond the stars."

IV

EVOLUTION then "is a continuous progressive change, according to certain laws, by means of resident forces." We have carefully discussed and safeguarded the use of all but one of these terms, and shown in what sense the definition so far may be accepted by theistic thinkers. But we have not dealt with the significance of the word "forces" as included in the above definition. Evolution as a fact is one thing—we may look at this as the accepted working theory of the "becoming" of the Universe in time and space; Evolution as a process determined by secondary causes is another, and it is this aspect of it which is the real ground of debate. What are the forces by which Evolution is determined and swayed and effected? This is a vast and troubled question, into which it is not our purpose to enter fully at present; but a few words on the main lines of the ever-renewed controversy are necessary for a proper

[1] Conclusion of "Divinity Address."

treatment of the bearings of Evolution on religious thought, and *vice versa.*

Early in the present century Lamarck brought out a theory which, if true, would account for much of the method of Nature in securing the development of species. He said that not only were "congenital" peculiarities in animals and Man inherited, but also such peculiarities as were "acquired." Much-used organs not only became more efficient in their performance of function during the lifetime of the individual, but the increased efficiency was transmitted to posterity, so that in a literal sense creatures rose "on stepping-stones of their dead selves" (*i.e.* ancestors) "to higher things." This theory was believed for many years to cover most of the facts, and even now there are prominent scientists who accept it, notably Mr. Herbert Spencer, who depends to a large extent on it for his special hypothesis of development. But with enlarging acquaintance with the facts of Nature, grave doubt was entertained of its efficiency to account for the widespread and continuous advance of the animated creation in complexity and variety of organism; and in these latter days it is stoutly maintained by eminent scientists that no acquired characteristics whatsoever are transmitted to posterity, chiefest among whom are Wallace, who says that this factor is needless to account for all the facts, and Weismann, who claims to prove that as a matter of fact it is impossible, or at any rate not true. But it is to Darwin that the credit chiefly belongs of developing an altogether new line of theory, upheld with an astonishing array of cogent and convincing proofs; and it was he who invented the term "Natural Selection" to denote this theory. Briefly it may be put thus.

The astonishing fertility of species has been noted for many years, as well as the contrary fact that in

spite of this fertility the total numbers of living creatures have not increased in anything like the same ratio. As a matter of fact, and as a consequence of this fertility, in each species many more individuals are born in every generation than can possibly survive, and, accordingly, there is a "struggle for existence." In this struggle for existence it is a logical deduction that the "fittest" must survive. And so there comes about a certain process of "selection" on the part of Nature, those individuals that are most in harmony with their environment ousting the others, and remaining behind to transmit their favourable peculiarities to their descendants, while the weaker and least fitted to live die off, or beget descendants that are soon pushed off the plane of existence. Given plenty of time, there is thus nothing to bar the result which we see as an observable fact in the world—that slowly and gradually there should be an advance in the complexity and efficiency for all purposes of life of the individuals and the species that survive.

These are the essential points of the theory of "Natural Selection." A matter that is being discussed just now with a great deal of learning and acumen is the exact significance to be accorded to this factor in accounting for the origin, or rather the *survival*,[1] of species. It is certain that under any circumstances Natural Selection can properly account only for their survival. For it is but a name, in the last resort, for the sum-total of Nature's destructive forces—those that are inimical to the survival of organisms. *It is a selection*

[1] It is confessed by Prof. Romanes, in a quotation from one of his writings given in Aubrey Moore's "Science and the Faith" (p. 64), that Natural Selection is not a theory of the *origin* of species. Cf. "Post-Darwinian Questions," p. 275: "The theory of Natural Selection is not, accurately speaking, a theory of the origin of species: it is a theory of the origin and accumulation of adaptations." See also p. 287.

by death. Being thus a fact altogether outside organism, it is impossible that it should give any explanation of the interior facts of organism. The great and vital question *why organisms vary* is left untouched by it. It is astonishing that even the foremost scientists should thus far have given so perfunctory and shallow an attention to this matter. Darwin took for granted that the variations which furnish the material for the action of Natural Selection are not only "spontaneous" (a very ambiguous term), but that they are *aimless* and in all possible directions. In this he has been followed by Weismann and others. But we have already seen that this assumption is, at least in certain directions, not true. The subject is only just beginning to be studied, and it is the confession of one of the pioneers in its solution that "the advance towards a knowledge of the steps by which Evolution proceeds has been almost nothing."[1] The religious significance of this fact lies in the opening it affords for what may in the end develop into a new doctrine of teleology from the standpoint of pure science. That doctrine in its broader aspects is already safe, though not in the specialised form advocated long ago by Paley. The "dramatic tendency" which is so evident in its grand and massive sweep right through the kingdoms of organic life is but another name for the realisation of a Divine and all-comprehending purpose. It may be that this purpose in another form will presently be recognised as controlling the minutest variation of individual creatures. It is at any rate clear that the reign of the doctrine of absolutely fortuitous variation is over, and that its death-blow has been dealt quite as much by the friendly hand of science as by the supposedly hostile sword of the theologian.

[1] W. Bateson, "Materials for the Study of Variation," p. 7.

'*I am the Tadpole of an Archangel.*'
VICTOR HUGO.

Chapter III.—Evolution and Man

Significance of Advent of Man—His Physical Origin—Though of the Brutes, yet not a Brute—Arrest of Physical Evolution—"Natural Selection" superseded—Man's Social and Ethical Nature—Self-consciousness—Religious Instinct—Evolution and Creation.

WHAT then has Evolution to say as to the significance of Man's arrival on the scene? Does it in any way interfere with the time-honoured claim he has been accustomed to put forth, that he is a being *sui generis*, and that he is separated by an impassable gulf of greatness from the highest types in the animal creation? Is he in future humbly to consider himself as only the most "developed" creature in the organic world, possessing nothing but what is seen in germ in the beast of the field, the fowl of the air, and the creeping things of the earth?

There are those who believe that the theory of Evolution has erased the last fundamental distinction hitherto drawn between Man and the rest of organic nature, and that there is no ultimate difference between him and those next to him in the scale of life, except such as can be explained by a difference of development. Man according to this theory, is nothing more or less than a more highly evolved animal. He is *actually* what the brutes are *potentially*. The difference is one of degree, not of kind.

This conclusion, however, is not by any means accepted in its totality by all candid Evolutionists; and it is a matter for fair inquiry whether those who hold this view

do so because they are Evolutionists, or because they link their Evolution with a system of philosophy which is quite separable from it. Bearing in mind what has already been said on this subject, it is enough here to say that, though the most determined effort has been made by a certain school of thinkers to prove the complete continuity of the serial links that connect Man with the orders of life below him, and to include his moral and spiritual nature, *i.e.* his most distinctive qualities, in the same generalisations as those that express the facts of organic life, this effort has not as yet been crowned with success. The more the contents of human personality are investigated and understood, the more hopeless does this effort become. Just as no possible bridge can be thrown across the chasm that separates the material from the psychical, so no possible bridge seems capable of being thrown across that subtle but no less real chasm which separates the self-conscious from the merely conscious creature.

With this essential qualification, to be further considered later on, we shall find no difficulty in fully accepting the evolutionary theory of Man's physical origin, and to allow, to a large extent at least, his mental as well as physical kinship with the lower orders. The more freely we allow this, and the more adequately we weigh the facts that are common to us and all living things, the more clearly will those facts which characterise our nature alone stand out in their uniqueness. We may go further, and allow that, whereas there are distinctive facts in human nature whose origin must not be sought for in any cunning adjustment of organic structure and function, but in some other direction, these facts still belong to the order of Evolution, inasmuch as they develop according to similar laws and follow the same processes.

I

It is no part of our purpose here to lay before the reader the evidence which has convinced scientific thinkers that Man is physically descended from the brute creation. Such a task can only be adequately accomplished after a survey of vast and complicated ranges of facts, many of a very technical nature, which can be properly handled only by skilled biologists. The outstanding characteristic of this argument is that it is cumulative; *i.e.* it derives its cogency not from a single, or a few, groups of facts of clear and irresistible force, but from the gradual convergence towards one conclusion of many apparently diverse and unrelated phenomena. These facts are explicable, and fall in line with all other biological deductions, on the theory that Man is physically derived from an "extinct arboreal creature"; but they resolve themselves into a perplexing and complicated enigma if we refuse to accept the conclusion towards which they move. Anatomy, morphology, embryology, pathology, and many other sciences speak with consentient voice on the matter; and though no single line of evidence suffices to settle so great a question, the more it is examined in all its bearings, the more irresistibly are we driven to the acceptance of the evolutionary view of the origin of Man. It has taken over half a century to gather, formulate, classify, and discuss the facts on which the theory is based; and the present position it occupies in the judgment of those most qualified to deal with it is that "there is no more reason to suppose that it will be ever gainsaid, than that the Copernican Astronomy will sometime be overthrown, and the concentric spheres of Dante's heaven be reinstated in the minds of men." [1]

[1] "Man's Destiny viewed in the Light of his Origin," by John Fiske, p. 20.

This presentation of the case is open to the obvious objection that it seems to hand over the average man, in the formation of his opinions on the subject, into the hands of experts, and to reduce the acceptance of the theory to an act of blind obedience to authority in the domain of science. This, if literally true, would be veritably a falling into the whirlpool in trying to avoid the rock, and is exactly the sin which scientific men have ever charged against theologians. But even if the charge in this case be true, it is not true in the old meaning of the terms. There is a sense of course in which the average man is in the hands of specialists in every science. The popular belief in the Copernican theory of Astronomy is based on the *bona fides* and competency of physicists and astronomers and mathematicians, who base their conclusions on calculations so complicated that only skilled students can follow them. At the same time, we all go on the assumption that if we fit ourselves by special training to follow out these calculations, we shall inevitably come to the conclusions already arrived at by previous thinkers. The only authority really acknowledged is the authority of rightly weighed and tabulated facts, and this authority of course is and must be paramount. He who desires to test the conclusions of biologists on the question of human origins has but to apply himself to a thorough study of the question to enable him to form his own conclusions. Nor is so drastic a course of special training now necessary in order to come to a sufficiently intelligent conclusion ; for the general lines of evidence have in recent years been so ably summarised, and presented in so popular and readable a form by competent writers, as to be intelligible in their broad outlines to any careful and open-minded reader. And finally, it must be pointed out that the theory holds the field at

present to the entire exclusion of every other. The alternatives are, either to fall back on some theory which has no scientific evidence to uphold it, or to remain in a state of suspended judgment which leaves the mind to act in an intellectual vacuum. The latter alternative, under conceivable circumstances of disputable and contradictory evidence, in which diverse theories might be fairly advocated with almost equal probability, would be the only logical course to follow; but in this particular instance it would have to be taken in the face of a well-supported generalisation, which commands the strenuous support of all those who have gone into the question with an open mind, and indeed of thousands who have done so with minds previously strongly prejudiced against the conclusion. For ourselves, we take up the position that it has been substantially proved, so far at least as the physical nature of Man is concerned, that "descent with modification" from some earlier and extinct species of creature accounts for the structure he possesses and the functions he fulfils in common with the lower animals.

II

THE further question, however, returns and presses for an answer—does this bring Man entirely within that circle of organic nature to which he finds himself so vitally and closely related, and are we to believe that all his higher faculties, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, are evolved from the germinal mental qualities of the animal creation?

This fear of the dethronement of man from his unique place at the headship of creation is at the root of much of the aversion to the idea of Evolution felt by the average man. There are many sensible and devout

people who believe earnestly in the Bible revelation, who are no longer troubled by the problems raised between Geology and Genesis, or by the fact that the precise order of events in the one cannot be quite harmonised with that of the other; familiarity has blunted their sensibilities in these directions, and they instinctively feel their faith to be safe whatever view may be taken of these questions. But the problem of Man's origin and place in Creation comes home very near to us. It touches our self-respect, wounds our pride, seems to endanger our racial sovereignty, and binds us so tightly in ignoble bonds of relationship with the monsters of the slime and the chattering apes of the forest that our link with God seems strained to snapping-point.

It is as well, therefore, that we should at this point emphasise the unquestionable fact that the theory of Evolution in no sense of the term dethrones Man from his pedestal of unique greatness among the creatures of earth. It simply defines his position, and tells us exactly in what his greatness consists. The more closely the physical relationship between Man and brute is established by Evolution so far as descent is concerned, the more profoundly has it demonstrated the mental and moral gap between him and his lowly kindred of the woods and the desert. Its motto is "So near, and yet so far!" This growing sense of a new element in Man, that he is not only the last of one series of beings, but the first of another, which, without changing its specific character, has in it unlimited possibilities of progress, fills the scientific mind with a profounder conviction than ever of Man's greatness because it is a conviction founded not on sentiment but on scientific proof. It has turned the eyes of the noblest thinkers from the lowly past, which belongs to other creatures than Man, to the limitless future,

which belongs in all its aeons to him alone. Evolution, in a word, has at last risen from its knees among the bones of the dead studying the origins of Man, and, assuming the prophet's mantle, shades its eyes with reverent hand in order to catch a vision of the dim but authentic City of God which hangs like a cloud on the horizon's edge. Let us therefore dismiss once for all the notion that Evolution interferes with the supreme dignity of Man. It crowns him with a diadem of glory and honour, on which the faint and yet unmistakable light of Immortality begins to glow. The moment when the full-grown Man, first of his kind, spurned the ground with his heel, and lifted his face towards the morning-stars, was a moment when the rigid and pitiless bond of physical necessity was broken, a new era of development begun, and the narrow portal of the Way of Life thrown wide open, that he might walk therein.

Let us glance at some of the considerations that bear on this all-important point.

Mr. Fiske, writing in the interests of science pure and simple, makes the following sweeping remark on the bearing of Evolution on the place of Man in the physical creation :—

"So far from degrading Humanity, or putting it on a level with the animal world in general, the Darwinian theory shows us distinctly for the first time how the creation and perfecting of Man is the goal toward which Nature has been all the while tending. It enlarges tenfold the significance of human life, places it upon even a loftier eminence than poets or prophets have imagined, and makes it seem more than ever the chief objective of the creative activity which is manifested in the physical universe."[1]

[1] "Man's Destiny," etc., p. 25.

When we ask in what way this is so, we find, as we have suggested, that science has rather defined and elaborated facts already well known, than added any recondite evidence of the supremacy of Man on earth; but these facts are now better understood, and their wider bearings more thoroughly appreciated. Let us glance at the most salient and suggestive of these.

Of course the root of Man's superiority is to be found in his mental and spiritual organisation. At some far-off period—so far off indeed that no record of it will ever be found—the moment came when mental changes became of more importance than physical changes to the brute ancestor of Man. Silently and unnoticed, this great day of Man dawned; without observation he entered into his distinctive heritage. Two results more or less immediately followed.

1. First, there was an arrest of bodily development. Organic Evolution had reached its climax; having succeeded in making a Man, "the force of Nature could no further go." The lower creatures gained their footing on the earth in virtue of some peculiar excellence of limb, or efficiency of organ, or sharpness of instinct, and new species ousted older ones by surpassing them in some useful development. But in virtue of a superior mental endowment, Man was no longer dependent on the perfection of his physical organs for victory against his foes, for he could now reach by strategy what they could only gain by force. According to the "law of parsimony" which rules in Nature, therefore, no further pains were spent on bodily developments, except to evolve a better brain as an organ for the evolving mind. Thus the physical advance made by man from prehistoric times to the present day has been almost entirely cerebral. By the enlargement of the cephalic cavity, and its storage with a finer quality and a more convoluted

form of brain-substance, he has been provided with all the organic improvement he has needed. The rest of his body may have gained in grace and beauty, but it has developed neither in the efficiency of its organs nor in any addition to the organs he already possessed. The tendency has indeed been largely in the other direction: *pari passu* with the advance of mind there has been in many ways a positive deterioration of the physical frame; and though there is a law which restrains the range of this deterioration within certain needful limits (since the loss of bodily vigour beyond a certain point inevitably results in mental decay), there is no doubt that there has been a definable loss of bodily efficiency since Man became Man.

2. Secondly, and at the root of this arrest of physical Evolution, there is the unquestionable fact that the absolute sway of the law of "Natural Selection" has been broken, and a new principle of survival been introduced in its place. That law is but another name for the tyranny of the environment; and Man has in a large measure risen above this tyranny.

When the customary food of an animal becomes scarce or fails, it has no resource but to get adapted to some new kind of food or die off. "Natural Selection" will settle which individuals and species (*i.e.* those with the least adaptable systems of digestion) must be weeded out. But Man can guard against this peril not only by the wonderful catholicity of his appetite, but by the power he has of controlling his environment in accordance with his needs. He is able to sow seeds, to defend his crops, to reap his harvest, and to store his grain. He can domesticate animals for purposes of work or food-supply; he can cook and eat what would otherwise be indigestible or even poisonous. He is thus, apart from accidents and vast cyclic changes (such, for instance, as

the occurrence of an ice-age, which has once at least completely swept a continent of a whole race of human beings[1]), independent of any changes in his edible environment, and can force Nature's hand to supply him with the best of her stores as he may require.

In the same way he is largely independent of the violent climatic changes that have been fatal to so many species. By altering his mode of living, by wearing more or less clothing as the climate changes, by his command of fire, by his architectural resources, he can adapt himself to, or defeat, the inclemency of the weather. Climate not only fails to kill him, but it largely loses its power to modify his physical structure. Thus in many ways Man can create an artificial environment for himself, and so put himself out of the range of that watchful and wily enemy that struts through the scientific world in the mild garb of professorial dignity under the name of "Natural Selection."

The discovery of tools—the spade, the plough, the sickle, the wheel; the hammer, the axe, the sword; the sling, the arrow; the lever, the wedge—began that extraordinary career of mastery over Nature, which, with us, "on whom the ends of the ages have come," has issued in the steamship, the locomotive, the hydraulic drill, the cannon-ball, the telephone, the spectrum, and countless other contrivances; all of which have extended the value of the primeval human muscle, ear, eye, and hand, till the very face of the planet is changing under the impress of the mind, and the globe has become a kind of "secondary body" for Man. By the use of

[1] According to Sir John Evans (Inaugural Address before the British Association at Toronto, 1897), the last ice-age came between the eras of Palaeolithic and Neolithic Man in Europe, the control of the race over the conditions of life at the former period being insufficiently developed to enable it to migrate to warmer regions.

these tools and weapons he has tamed the wildest animals, he has rendered deserts fertile, he has conquered time and distance, "even the winds and the sea obey him." And even yet it would appear that this kingship over Nature is only in its infancy. Things are possible to him to-day which a hundred years ago would have been laughed at as the dreams of crazy enthusiasts; and it may be that before another century is out the triumphs of to-day will become as antiquated as the spinning-wheel and the stage-coach of yesterday. And all this is due simply to the fact that Man is realising the possibilities of his mental faculties, and beginning to use them in a practical way, stooping into obedience to natural law only that he may conquer it to his will. Natural Selection thus abdicates in favour of Mental Selection, and, by disciplining himself, Man is learning to subdue the earth, and so to possess it.

3. Another vast step in advance made by Man is in realising the possibilities of his *social instincts*. These, it is true, appear in a highly developed form in certain animal species, in whom there has been a reciprocal action of mental and social factors of great beauty and intricacy. It would seem, however, that this process has never risen above the region of the instinctive in the lower animals, and as instinct is non-progressive except at a very slow and cyclic rate, and even then only within sharp and rigid limits, the analogy between such communities and human society is but faint. For in Man the principle of progress is self-conscious; it *knows itself*, which is a peculiarity of quite immeasurable import. It is also different in that it is capable of acting in an altruistic manner, and of being swayed by moral affections. "In the rudest tribes," writes Mr. Wallace, "the sick are assisted, at least with food; less robust health and vigour than the average does not

entail death. Neither does the want of perfect limbs, or of other organs, produce the same effect as among animals. Some division of labour takes place; the swiftest hunt, the less active fish, or gather fruits; food is to some measure exchanged or divided. The action of natural selection is therefore checked; the weaker, the dwarfish, those of less active limbs, or less piercing eyesight, do not suffer the extreme penalty which falls upon animals so defective."[1] Thus we come upon a real social activity, essentially different in kind from that which obtains among animal communities. Animals have a social *instinct*; they will perform the most "heroic" acts in defence of their young, or even of their community; but these moving incidents have this fatal mark of inferiority, that they are performed blindly, in obedience to an impulse, and not consciously, out of reverence for an ideal. But Man, out of these materials of instinct, weaves a texture of noble deeds which are truly moral, because they are the fruit of a free and conscious will. Not blindly, but with clear vision of the cost as well as of the value of self-sacrifice; not mechanically, but from a choice unfettered by a mere organic necessity; not pushed from behind, but drawn by a vision from above, does Man rise into the lofty heights of unselfishness and give his life for others—the strong for the weak, the wise for the erring, the good for the vicious. Thus are the limits of personality broken down; the poorest member of a community is made partaker of the moral and spiritual wealth of the best, and the soul that is weakest made the heir of the souls that are strongest and most beauteous. By means of language the riches of the most developed minds are made available for the benefit of the least developed; and by love and mutual service the

[1] "Natural Selection," p. 112.

resources of the finest characters become common property.

The net result of these considerations is to bring us to the startling conclusion that in Man physical Evolution has reached its limits and that there will never appear on earth a higher being than himself.

On the old theory of Man's origin there was no assurance but that at some time or other another being higher in the scale of physical being would appear on the earth, and Man be dethroned from his proud position at the head of things; for what happened once through miraculous power might happen again, nor is there anywhere in Scripture any assurance that this would not occur. But on the Darwinian theory this is impossible,[1] for we have seen that he stands at the head of physical Evolution, and all future development is in his own hands and under his own control.

Nor is it possible for any of the lower animals at any future time to dispute with Man for his lordship over creation. For the way of upward evolution is a "very straight and narrow way, and few there be that find it."[2] "In the case of organic evolution it is so straight and narrow that any divergence therefrom is fatal to upward movement towards man. No living form of animal is on its way manward, nor can by any possibility develop into man. They are all gone out of the way. There is none going right; no, not one."[3] There being but one direction along which Evolution could possibly reach from physical to psychical results—the line along which

[1] *I.e.* because the law of Natural Selection has reached the limits of its action, and has given way to the higher law of Rational Life. This is a change so immense in its significance that the conditions of the whole problem are changed, and the future march of Evolution takes an altogether fresh direction.

[2] "Evolution and Religious Thought," by Joseph Le Conte, p. 90.

[3] *Ibid.*

Man has been led—we may rest in peace that our position is impregnable, and that in the future even more than in the past the world will be under our authority and control. In what direction and with what machineries we may look forward towards further advancement we shall see later on, when our thoughts will be running along higher levels, in view of the Incarnation and the Cross.

III

But the question may be fairly asked—Is it quite clear and certain that the self-conscious factor which is the distinguishing quality of Man is not a "by-product" of the older forces that have been in action from the beginning, but which have not till this late period unfolded all their possibilities and results? In a word, may not Man's mental and moral nature, remarkably as it differs from that of the brute creatures around him, still be of the same fundamental essence?

Let us appeal to those who know most about the science that deals with the borderland between the mental and physical worlds, and enters into the essential differences between physical and psychical phenomena —the science of Experimental Psychology.

On the one side we find that Darwin himself seems to have seriously entertained the belief that Man was altogether, mentally as well as physically, derived from the brute creation, and that the exhibition of mentality in him is not different in any essential particular from that in the lower animals. He says in the third chapter of "The Descent of Man": "My object in this chapter is to show that there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher animals in their mental

faculties."[1] Mr. Wallace in another place interprets Darwin's position thus:—

"Although perhaps nowhere distinctly formulated, his whole argument tends to the conclusion that man's entire nature, and all his faculties, whether moral, intellectual, or spiritual, have been derived from their rudiments in the lower animals, in the same manner, and by the action of the same general laws, as his physical structure has been derived."[2]

If this statement of Darwin's position be accurate, and there is no reason whatever to doubt that it is essentially correct, nothing could be clearer than that the discoverer of the theory of "Natural Selection" did really believe in the identity of the mental life of Man and his humbler brethren in the scale of being. And there are not a few eminent men, prominent among whom was the late Prof. G. J. Romanes, who have undertaken the systematic proof of this formidable proposition. In his two bulky works on "Animal Intelligence" and "Mental Evolution in Man," the professed aim is "to prove that human and animal psychology differ not in kind but in degree," difference in kind, meaning, according to him, "difference in origin."[3] His work in this direction is painstaking and ingenious, but it is not convincing. It is a fundamental flaw in Prof. Romanes' method of treating the question that he argues entirely on the basis of the old-fashioned empirical psychology of Locke, "curiously supplemented by terms borrowed from the Kantian School,"[4] a careless or ignorant obliviousness of facts known to all who have given even a perfunctory attention to the

[1] Page 66.
[2] "Darwinism," p. 461.
[3] "Mental Evolution in Man," p. 3.
[4] See an interesting review of Prof. Romanes' position in Aubrey Moore's "Essays, Scientific and Philosophical," pp. 41-60.

history of philosophy during the last hundred years. Without entering into the involved argument which he weaves out of these doubtful premises, it will be enough to dwell for a little while on the turning-point in the discussion, which is thus put by Mr. Romanes himself:—

"The whole distinction between man and brute resides in the presence or absence of conceptual thought, which in man is but the expression of the presence or absence of self-consciousness. . . . The distinction between a *recept* and a *concept* is really the only distinction about which there can be no dispute."[1]

Put into the language of science as ordinarily used, this means simply the distinction between "truth perceived, and truth perceived as true," and we have but to consider this for a moment to see that it is one of the root-distinctions of mental science.

By *recept*, a term invented by Prof. Romanes in the exigencies of his own peculiar psychology, he means that which may be called a "compound idea," or "complex idea," or "mixed idea," *i.e.* the combination of "simple" or "concrete" ideas into that kind of composite idea "which is possible without the aid of language," and which stands in the order of ideation midway between the simple or particular idea (usually termed "percept") and the truly general idea (usually termed "concept").

Now, that animals possess the "receptual" power no psychologist doubts; the question is whether the receptual and conceptual powers are of the same order, and whether the former has all the essential but undeveloped elements of the latter? If so, then Prof. Romanes is right when he compares the leap from the receptual stage to the conceptual stage in the budding

[1] Romanes' "Mental Evolution in Man," p. 175.

infant mind to the leap in the bodily life at the moment of birth. But is the analogy a fair one? The mental change involved in the former case is *sui generis*; and this even on Prof. Romanes' own showing, for he says, with the frankness that is as honourable to himself as it is fatal to his argument, "A receptual judgment is always separated from a conceptual inference or true judgment by the immense distinction that it is not in itself an object of knowledge." In other words, "the whole distinction between man and brute resides in the presence or absence of conceptual thought, which in man is but the expression of the presence or absence of self-consciousness."

"The presence or absence of self-consciousness"—that is the way truly to test the difference between Man and brute. The question is narrowed down to this—What is the psychological significance of self-consciousness? The problem needs careful consideration.

1. Beginning for a moment a little further back, neither sentiency nor self-consciousness is in any sense a product of material forces.[1]

2. Neither is self-consciousness the same fact as sentiency. Man in common with the higher and lower animals possesses a delicately adjusted nervous system which reacts on proper contact with the outer world. His system shows the same susceptibility to reflex, automatic, and instinctive action as theirs do. He has the same "sensory consciousness" as have the higher animals. What then is the difference between him and them? What is there peculiar to him?

"It is his rational discrimination in advance of sensory discrimination. All organism feels contact and acts in response to it. All human life not only does these two things, but also interprets experience, thereby

[1] See above, p. 29.

forming a knowledge of the things with which the sensitive organism comes into contact. This contrast is bold and sharp in outline. We first say, it is with man as with the animal; we next say, it is not with the animal as it is with man."[1] And if the question is pressed—What is the difference between sensibility, common between man and the star-fish, and rational discrimination, belonging only to man?—we must put it in this way:—

(*a*) It is a sense of contrast between successive sensory impressions and the consciousness of difference between past and present impressions.

This is not exactly the same fact as memory (which is to be found in a nascent form in the brutes), because it is something that reacts on the materials provided by memory (being a power of which there is no ascertainable trace in the brutes). This kind of internal observation, or introspection as it is sometimes called, is Man's starting-point for the development of the rational life; by means of it he can analyse, compare, and contrast his past and present experiences as they come up before his mental purview. His identity does not consist in the fact that he is a mere bundle of associated sensations, as is the case with the brutes, but in the fact that he can observe, mentally rearrange, and judge, qualitatively and quantitatively, of the nature of his sensations. There is thus in his nature a *tertium quid*, which has the faculty of disposing of the factors of every act of comparison and judgment, and this is his distinctive *Ego*, or Self.

(*b*) In self-consciousness there is implied a consciousness of the world, or mental environment, as something *outside* or *distinct from* the Self.

[1] See Calderwood's chapter on "Sensory Rational Discrimination," in "Evolution and Man's Place in Nature," pp. 122-144 (1st Ed.).

That is to say, "in observation we pass from experience to objects." Such observation is impossible "without consciousness of distinction between self and successive experiences, and also of the distinction between experience and external objects." In such a transition, we move from the recognition of feelings to that of qualities, and though all qualities can be interpreted in terms of feeling, they are felt by the mind to be quite different in nature—qualities being referred to the external objects in which they inhere, and feelings to the Ego that experiences them. This duality in self-consciousness is, so far as can be scientifically ascertained, absolutely missing in the sense-consciousness of the highest animals.

(*c*) In self-consciousness we do something more than barely realise our own individuality and the existence of an external world. We classify as well as compare, and so get to *general notions* or *ideas*. We group objects and feelings alike in separate categories, and bring into rational order what would otherwise be a mere jumble of meaningless experiences. When we exercise this power we turn the materials of knowledge into Science. As we go on making new observations we enrich or modify our previous classifications, and by observing the sequences as well as the groupings of phenomena, we come at last to the conception of general laws, and especially to the law of causation, and so finally of a great First Cause. "Simply by his possession of rational power," says Prof. Calderwood, "every member of the race goes on his way as a freeman, taking possession of his inheritance in the earth. For every man who does not lose his way, through darkness, or through blinding passion—overwhelmed by life's mysteries, or besotted by animal indulgences—a rich possession is waiting, quite above

the supply of the common requirements of organic life. Science is his servant; literature is his property; philosophy is his guide in higher thought; revelation becomes his inspiration. Under warrant of abundant evidence, we distinguish two worlds in Nature—the world of matter and the world of mind; a world visible only to the eye; a world invisible to organism—visible only to rational insight."[1]

And thus, whether viewed subjectively or objectively, Man is in no danger of being dethroned from the position he has occupied in his own eyes from the earliest day when he began to reflect on his place in the earthly order, but is pronounced by Science to be separated by an impassable gulf of greatness from the brute creation at its highest. Evolution only links him in closer physical kinship with the rest of the organic Universe. It does not explain his origin. It cannot uncrown him of his supremacy. It reveals him still as a being apart from the rest of the world in which he lives; unique in his endowments; possessing many brute qualities in virtue of his physical organisation, but absolutely apart from the highest brutes in the possession of distinctive and inalienable qualities of his own.

3. Here we may pause to consider the account given by the physical school of Evolutionists of the rise of the moral sense in Man. They hold that the raw material of this faculty is to be found in the social instincts and affections. Primitive races gifted with the largest capacity for co-operation were better able to repel the attacks of outsiders, and finding that the welfare of the community and its internal development depended largely on the habit of close and united action, it was inevitable that this sense of common interest

[1] "Man's Place in Evolution," p. 220 (1st Ed.).

should be gradually increased by exercise. The "individualistic" tribes, being thus at a disadvantage in the struggle for existence, would be gradually weeded out, both through internal dissension, and through the attacks of better disciplined enemies. The surviving tribes would become more and more convinced of the utility of social co-operation, and would elaborate into a law what at first was the fruit of an unreasoning instinct. The relationships of the family, rooted as they are in the very necessities of our being, and laying upon all parents the unavoidable burden of caring for their children during the long years of infancy and childhood, would be of immense service in developing the finer social affections, and furnish a basis for the higher virtues, such as sympathy, gentleness, and altruism.[1] Finally, the discovery of the many advantages following on the subdivision of labour in the community would work strongly in the direction of fostering a sense of mutual reliance and interdependence. Thus Man, by infinitely slow but sure degrees, would develop a conscience, and become possessed of a more or less lively sense of responsibility towards his fellows.

It may be freely granted that a social environment was necessary to the emergence and development of the ethical nature of Man. The moral sense still finds its appropriate environment in the interplay of social relationships. Environment, like opportunity, however, is not creative. It does not account for the contents of organism as such. There must be something for environment to work upon, something for opportunity to call into action. In the case before us, this something is a faculty that appears for the first time in humanity,

[1] Prof. Drummond in his "Ascent of Man," chaps. vii.—ix., develops this aspect of social evolution with great power and eloquence.

constituting a fresh departure as distinct from blind impulse and irrational instinct as living matter is distinct from matter devoid of life. The fundamental basis of the true moral faculty is found in self-consciousness, which constitutes Man into a "free" personality capable of reflecting on the facts of his conscious life, able to regard motives in an ascending and descending scale of value, to choose between such as present themselves as alternatives, and to give the effective place to any motive, not in virtue of its momentary strength, but of its ethical "quality." Moral relationships in the proper sense can only exist between beings thus endowed. There is nothing in purely animal psychology to correspond with this sense of the qualitative difference between the alternatives of choice. Animals may "hesitate" before they act, that is, when conflicting impulses within them are in unstable equilibrium. The hesitation, however, at once ceases as soon as any one impulse emerges into dominance, and the action follows as inevitably as a moving body follows the resultant line of mechanical forces pressing upon it. Man, on the contrary, can "reflect" on his warring impulses; he can judge, rearrange, and control such motives as may be present in his mind, and by this "self-determining" power settle whether he shall obey them or dismiss them out of his regard altogether. To the objective observer he may still seem to be determined by the strongest motive (all moral action is action determined by motive); but as he subjectively observes himself, he knows that he is not the mere sport of any motive, but a free agent who has given some particular motive the victory in obedience to a higher or lower ideal of conduct which he chooses as the regulative principle of his character. Ethical action, thus, is not "uncaused" action; it is "self-caused." "To be free means that one is determined

by nothing but by oneself."[1] No animal possesses a self in this higher sense, nor any dawning sense of it; and moral freedom is thus another distinguishing mark of the genus *Homo*.

4. Closely allied with the ethical is the religious sense. The sphere of ethics is found in the relationships that exist between man and man; the sphere of religion is found in the relationships that exist between Man and his Maker.[2] How he first became conscious of the existence of a Higher Being or Beings is a question of great interest and of great difficulty; it does not, however, make any difference, as is sometimes alleged, as to the reality and validity of the facts. It is the contention of the Physical School that the notion of a Deity, to whom he owes allegiance and with whom he can come into conscious touch, was evolved through the influence of dreams. After some

[1] Mackenzie's "Manual of Ethics," p. 94. In a footnote this writer adds: "Those writers who insist on the fact that there is determination or law in all our actions, and who on this ground deny freedom, are commonly known as Necessitarians or Determinists. On the other hand, those who insist on liberty to such an extent as to deny all law or determination in human conduct, are called Libertarians or Indeterminists. It is now generally recognised that these two schools of writers simply represent opposite sides of the same truth, and that the idea of self-determination combines the two sides."

[2] Dr. Martineau in his "Study of Religion" (Vol. I., p. 1) rightly insists on this distinction between Ethics and Religion, "understanding by 'Religion' belief in an Ever-living God, that is, of a Divine Will ruling the Universe, and holding Moral relations with mankind." Dr. Fairbairn ("The Place of Christ in Modern Theology," p. 493) says that Religion is "but the symbol of the kindred natures and correlated energies of God and man. . . . Religion may be described as man's consciousness of supernatural relations, or his belief in the reciprocal activities of his own spirit and the Divine." Similarly Prof. W. N. Clarke in his eminently fresh and able "Outline of Christian Theology" puts the matter thus: "Religion is the life of man in his superhuman relations; that is, in his relation to the Power that produced him, the Authority that is over him, and the Unseen Being with Whom he is capable of communion" (p. 1).

one had died, some one else dreamed about him, and this gave rise to the idea that he was still alive. Hence, by degrees, there evolved the so-called instinctive belief in the survival of the soul after death, which later on developed into the full-grown doctrine of Immortality. In the earlier stages of this process came the phase of ancestor-worship, still prevalent among savage races, and even among the civilised Chinese and other Eastern nations. This gradually became purified of its grosser elements, passing during the process through various well-defined stages. The first of these was a belief in a plurality of gods, who were held to be very powerful in their influence on human destiny, capable of being incensed by wrong-doing and of being placated by means of worship and sacrifice. By slow degrees, this faith was sublimated once more of its more materialistic aspects, and ethicised into Monotheism, or a belief in one God, Maker of heaven and earth, the Friend and the Saviour of Mankind. Once more, and for the last time, we are face to face with a change in religious belief, which involves a denial of the personality of the Divine Being, whom we are henceforth to conceive of as a Self-existent but Unknowable Entity, whose nature is hidden from us behind the impenetrable mists of phenomena. Worship thus finally resolves itself into Reverence for the Unknowable Power, and Religion into practical ethics "tinged with emotion," the duty of Man to God being replaced by a loftier and more operant sense of our social duties.

This is the programme of the physical school of Evolutionists. It is not necessary, in order to deal successfully with it, and to maintain our position as believers in the unique quality of the moral and religious "instincts," to deny their gradual and almost imperceptible development. A process may be evolutionary

in form without being necessarily physical in origin. The religious instinct clearly evolves in the individual: there was a time in the infancy of the most devout men when they had no more interest in matters spiritual than have the lower animals. We have all *grown* into the possession of our moral and religious faculties. This does not in any way disprove that they are innate in the individual. Nor does it do away in the race with the fact that these instincts are peculiar to Man, and cannot be resolved into elements of which we have rudimentary glimpses in the lower creation. Whether, therefore, the process which ends in the reasoned faith of Christianity began with Animism, or Ancestor-worship, is a matter of profound indifference so far as the question of the validity of the Faith is concerned. It is but natural that there should have been many crude guesses at the riddle of existence before the final answer was reached; that many partial revelations of the truth should have been granted, suitable to the various stages of Man's religious consciousness, before the Word was made flesh in the fulness of time; that much darkness should have been mingled with the light before it broadened into perfect day. That this should be so, both in the region of ethics and that of religion, is exactly what was to be expected in a world like this, and with a being so essentially slow to come to complete mastery of his faculties and of his environment as Man has always proved himself to be.

IV

Evolution has sometimes been represented as discrediting the notion of a Creator. This again is an entirely gratuitous assumption, and breaks down after

a little examination. The true antithesis brought to light by the new science is not that of "creation" *v.* "no creation," but of "creation by fiat" *v.* "creation by process." "The essence of the difference between the older and the newer doctrine," writes Dr. Martineau in his usual trenchant style, "lies in this: that the causality which the former concentrates, the latter distributes; the fiat of a moment bursts open, and spreads itself along the path of perpetuity."[1]

The case may be put in another way. Was the method of creation by the substitution of new species for the old in successive epochs, or by the transmutation of old species into new by gradual modification and descent? In the first case, when a fresh species appeared on the earth, it would be specially created by a separate and unrelated Divine act; in the other, it would come about by the gradual modification of some existing species.

Now it is clear that this does not in any way touch the question of creation as a fact, but only the *method* of creation. Strangely enough, there are those who think that God is not only dethroned but abolished when His method of working is explained. Once more to quote Prof. Le Conte :—

"So long as we knew not how worlds were made, we of course concluded that they were created, but as soon as science showed how it was probably done, immediately we say that we were mistaken—'they were not made at all.' So also, so long as we could not imagine how new organic forms originated, we were willing to believe that they were created; but, so soon as we find that they were originated by Evolution, many at once say, 'We were mistaken; no Creator is necessary at all.' Is this so when the question is

[1] "The Seat of Authority in Religion," p. 13.

concerning the work of man? Yes, of one kind—viz. the work of the magician. Here, indeed, we believe in him and delight in his work, until we know how it is done, and then all our faith and wonder cease. But in any honest work it is not so; but, on the contrary, when we understand how it is done, stupid wonder is changed into intellectual delight."[1]

And indeed so long as the fact of Evolution is so undeniably true of the individual life, it is surely perversity alone that finds an insurmountable barrier to the acceptance of the same fact in the history of the race. Every single human being undeniably grows to full maturity by a perfectly natural process from a homogeneous egg-cell or corpuscle. Is it then a lowering of Man's dignity to say that he is the latest flower of the great tree of life, whose roots stretch back into the illimitable past, and into the "dim profound" of a mystery that lies alike behind organic and inorganic existence? Is God's hand less clearly impressed on Man because his body has been derived from that of an "apelike" ancestor (also created by God), *i.e.* because his Creator has made use, as it were, of material already prepared, through countless aeons, for His final *chef-d'œuvre*, instead of using what may be literally called the "dust of the earth"? And is the coming of the spiritual principle in Man less Divine and impressive because, in the higher animals, organism was already becoming sensitive to something nobler than physical stimulus, and was, as it were, trembling forward towards finer issues, till ready to be kindled at the sacred touch of God's breath, and become the tabernacle of an immortal soul? Nor, finally, should any difficulty be felt at the impossibility of stating exactly *when* the critical moment occurred which turned the "manlike

[1] "Evolution and Religious Thought," pp. 287, 288.

ape" into the "apelike man." For the same difficulty presents itself precisely in the history of the individual Man. At what point in the embryonic development of the individual is the soul "with its potential consciousness implanted? Is it in the protoplasmic cell? in the new-born infant? or at five years of age?"[1] This question has never been settled; and yet no one doubts that at some point or other this stupendous change took place; nor does the difficulty of determining the matter seem to trouble those who in the other case are full of fears lest the dreaded proof of Darwinism should overthrow the foundations of their theology. A little calm reflection will show how exactly parallel the two cases are, and how utterly baseless are the fears of those who tremble so violently for the ark of God in the one instance, while in the other they are so unconscious of peril. It is one of those cases, which are far more frequent than we imagine, in which a failure to realise the true issues at stake breeds an inconsistent attitude towards the whole question; and those who otherwise would find no difficulty in accepting the results of science are kept in a constant state of fear and trembling lest some fancied outpost of the Faith be taken by assault. What is wanted is a mind well informed in the real alternatives, and a heart whose personal grasp of the truth of God is steadfast and unwavering; and then there is nothing to fear, and much, as we hope we have shown, to gain, by following out the relations between the teachings of Science and Religion in regard to the Origin of Man.

[1] See Prof. Ray Lankester's "Advancement of Science," pp. 51-55.

Book I: Evolution and the Fall of Man

"Did you say the stars were worlds, Tess

"Yes."

"All like ours?"

"I don't know; but I think so. They sometimes seem to be like the apples on our stubbard-tree. Most of them splendid and sound—a few blighted."

"Which do we live on—a splendid one or a blighted one?"

"A blighted one."

THOMAS HARDY, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.*

"The subject of the first chapter of Genesis is not Creation, but the Creator. What it gives us is not a world, but a God."

PROF. W. G. ELMSLIE.

BOOK I

EVOLUTION AND THE FALL OF MAN

Chapter I.—Genesis and the Creation—The First Account

Three Centuries of Controversy—Triumph of Science in her own Domain—And of Genesis in the Spiritual Sphere—A False Scent—Characteristics of Elohist Writer—Tabular Scheme of the "Days of Creation"—"Not Science, but Theology."

BEFORE we go further in our approach towards the first of the three great questions which form the landmarks of our inquiry, that is, the doctrine of the Fall of Man as affected by the theory of Evolution, let us carefully consider the Biblical account of the creation of Man as we find it outlined in the first chapter of Genesis.

The average thoughtful mind, in approaching this discussion, is very much in the position of a man who is called upon to admire a landscape as the last grim sounds of battle are dying away from it. Under such conditions, it would be impossible for him to rise into an aesthetic mood, or to give a dispassionate consideration to the higher suggestions of the view. Especially would this be so if he were vitally interested in the conflict itself. The tragic struggle would absorb all his mind, and though what was left of its traces might be insignificant amid the vast expanse of beauty, their presence would be enough to obscure the glory of the whole landscape. It is with something of the same feelings that many devout readers of the Bible approach the

first chapters in Genesis. For generations they have been the scene of bitter and oft-renewed conflict, involving some of the most vital interests of the human soul. Now, it is Copernicus and the doctors of his time, wrangling over the comparative claims of the earth and the sun to be considered the centre of the Solar System; now, it is Galilei in a dark Italian prison, signing away under fear of Inquisition-torture, the earth's last right to revolve round her own axis, but whispering all the time "Still she moves"; now it is Lyell's "Geology" that conflicts with Archbishop Ussher's chronology of Scripture, multiplying by millions the meagre thousands of birthdays hitherto allowed to the earth; now it is a controversy whose watchwords suggest a mere question of rival authority between Moses and Darwin, as though they were professors in two opposing schools of instruction; and yet once more the earth and the heavens are shaken by the broader issues involved in the terms "Higher Criticism," "Evolution and Genesis." For four hundred years the haze of battle has not lifted from these sublime and incomparable chapters. This would not much matter if the issues involved were purely abstract and theoretical. But they are unfortunately supremely practical. The struggle has been in reality between two essential parts of Man's nature. The intellectual and the spiritual instincts have been at war; and the issues have been none the less bitterly fought out because they have been complicated by all the quenchless animosity of a civil war. All men who have any regard for their higher welfare have thus, in spite of themselves, been drawn into the mood of conflict, and most of us at one time or another have lost all the stimulus and grandeur of the sublime creation-scene in a sorry participation in the confusion and wrath, the recrimination and passion, that have marked the

course of this age-long and apparently interminable controversy.

But now that a better mood is dawning, and the smoke of battle is clearing off, and a truer appreciation of the common brotherhood that ought to exist between the religious and the scientific man is growing, two great results begin to stand out clear and prominent, and a third seems inevitably suggested.

I

First, it is clear that, wherever the alleged teachings of Genesis as to the method of Creation have come into conflict with the ascertained principles of Science, the latter have triumphed all along the line. It was supposed at one time, for instance, that to hold the sun to be the centre of the Solar System was incompatible with a belief in the teachings of Genesis. Does any one think so now? It was at one time believed, on the supposed authority of Genesis, that the sun and moon were created as celestial appendages to the earth, and that their only function was to "rule the day and the night" as luminaries. Does any one hold that faith now, or doubt that the earth is astronomically as much an appendage to the sun as the moon is to the earth? It was at one time believed that the vast layers of geologic rocks were superimposed on one another, all ready stocked with fossils, in six days of twenty-four hours each, just as we find them now, upheaved by cyclic disturbances, and weathered as we know by timeless aerial influences. The elder Mr. Gosse, forty or fifty years ago, believed that a fossil skeleton, found with the remains of food in its interior, was never a part of a living creature, but was made just as we find it, "a kind of stage property" in the theatre of Nature.

Does any intelligent man, scientist or theologian, believe in such a monstrous theory now, or doubt that the fossiliferous strata of the earth really contain the record of the course of ascending life through countless generations and millenniums of existence? Thirty years ago, many scientists, and all but a few theologians, believed that all the species of animals came into existence independently, and by direct creative fiat. Now there are very few men of scientific attainments, few even of our religious thinkers, who do not believe in the gradual evolution of one species from another, and that even Man is to be included—physically at least—in the category of those creatures who have developed from lower orders by "descent and gradual modification." It would seem at this point of time as impossible to resist the cogency of the scientific argument in this direction, and keep back the advancing tide of Evolutionary thought with the besom of a literalistic interpretation of Scripture, as it was for Dame Partington, in Sydney Smith's story, to repel the inroads of the Atlantic Ocean with her mop. Considering how in the past all endeavours to beat off the advance of Science in her own domain, on the ground of her disagreement with the letter of Scripture, have ended so uniformly and inevitably in discreditable and hopeless defeat, it is clear that the only remedy is to take up our theologic standpoint above high-water mark altogether, and so be freed from the recurrent necessity of retreating to "safe ground." If we remain much longer on these lowlands, our fate will be that of the submerged village of Is on the Breton coast, and the voice of inspiration will become as faint and uncertain as the legendary bells of that lost hamlet, which the fishermen of Brittany say they can still dimly hear on calm evenings between the lulls of Atlantic storms.

II

THAT is the first lesson history teaches us. The second is still more startling. It is that in spite of these successive stormings of the old "theologic" positions, and the abandonment of the ancient "outworks" of faith, the Genesis account of Creation still holds a unique place in the world's reverence. Not all the dust and din of this weary controversy can suffice to destroy its impression on the mind. It still speaks to us as no other record of the origin of things can do. It strikes a higher and more august note; it plumbs lower depths of feeling; it finds us in a more secret place of the soul, than anything that ancient philosophers or modern scientists can tell us. Neither Homer nor Hesiod, Anaxagoras nor Lucretius, Assyrian tablet nor Egyptian hieroglyphic, Accadian myth nor Sanscrit folklore, any more than the speculations of Spencer or Darwin, Huxley or Haeckel, can touch the sonorous chords—"like the sound of a great Amen"—that vibrate through these grand and pregnant sentences. What the later sages say concerning the first beginnings of order and life in the universe meets the intelligence with conviction, but leaves the heart still orphaned and homeless. When they have told us all they have to say about the *How?* and the *When?* and the *Where?* of Creation, we are still hungry for the answer to the greatest questions of all—the *Why?* and the *Whence?* and the *Whither?* It is these greatest questions that find their authentic answer in Genesis, *and nowhere else.* As it has been well pointed out,[1] in the theatre of Creation the scientists and philosophers—the scene-shifters—present us with the drama complete in all its subsidiary movements and

[1] Prof. W. G. Elmslie, *Contemporary Review* for December. 1887.

parts, but the principal Personage is invisible from the auditorium in which the spectators stand. As a result, we admire the scenery, the accessories are perfect, the action is harmonious; but there is no deep meaning in it all, no Divine passion, no spiritual climax: the heart waits for something, for some one, that will reduce the whole to unity and final order, and give the underlying meaning of it all. In vain do we ask and wait; nothing comes. But from the elevated position in which the author (or authors) of Genesis places us, we suddenly come in sight of the Prime Mover, the Central Character; we hear His mighty and all-commanding voice; the whole drama falls into place and beauty and meaning; the dry bones of Science suddenly spring into life, rise, and sing the Hymn of Praise which the "morning stars sang together," when "all the sons of God shouted for joy." The vast creation is no longer a "charnel-house and a grave," which is all that the geologist can make of it, nor a tragic battle, "red in tooth and claw," which flashes from the canvas of the biologist: in the dim primeval light we recognise the first glow of God's "great Rose of Dawn," which will sometime broaden into the perfect day of grace; and as the conviction thus grows on us that the Universe is "Godlike and my Father's," we cannot but worship and bow the head.

III

What are we to infer from these two unquestionable results—the triumph of Science in her own domain, and the still more striking triumph of the Genesis record of creation from the higher point of view? The inference seems sufficiently obvious. We have been running after a false issue all these centuries, which has plunged us into the most painful and persistent controversy since

the dawn of the Reformation. In this controversy there have been three parties, all guilty of a fundamental fallacy. There are those who uphold the Bible account of creation as scientifically accurate in all its details. This party has to all intents and purposes had its day; the steady advance of established scientific results has hopelessly discredited the assertion that the first chapters of Genesis, understood *verbatim et literatim*, are an exact account of the origin of things, and it is not likely to be ever revived. Then there have been those who have absolutely denied any permanent value to the Biblical story, because it cannot be squared with the story of Science. This is still a strong and influential party, and includes many eloquent and earnest scientific writers in its ranks. And there are those who have been ever making earnest, but it would appear futile, attempts to prove that there is no essential contradiction between the two accounts, and by a system of ingenious compromise have aimed at striking a *via media* between a crude literalism on the one hand and a bald rejection of the Biblical position on the other. The worst of this method is that with the advance of Science it is necessary to correct a recurrent tendency to panic, by undignified compromises and ever-broadening concessions to the spirit of the age, as it goes its inevitable way towards capturing the whole position.

The fallacy of which these three parties are guilty is to imagine that the account of creation given in the Sacred Volume is really meant to be a scientific revelation. Both by the exponents and the opponents of the theory that the Bible is the authentic Word of God, this has been at first tacitly, and then formally, taken for granted. And the consequences have been complicated by the theory of Verbal Inspiration which has lived so long, and which is now dying so hard. That

theory, which makes the slightest error in points of fact, of history, or even of accidental allusion, fatal to the whole authority of the Book, has given an immense advantage to its opponents. For if they can prove the slightest inaccuracy in the form and vehicle of Revelation, they have altogether discredited the Bible as an infallible guide. Let us not forget the good wrought by this theory, in earlier ages, nor impugn the excellent motives and character of those who still hold to it. Before the days of printing, it was the safeguard of textual accuracy, when every copyist who rewrote the Sacred Book was in danger of mutilating it by carelessness and inattention; it ensured a careful and devout study of the whole volume; it established the authority of the Book deep in the heart and conscience of its readers; and it secured for the Bible the unique place it has held in the reverence and faith of Christendom. So far we must include the theory of Verbal Inspiration among those beneficent illusions by which the Spirit of Truth and Love has been educating the race towards the apprehension of higher truths. But now that the text of the Bible has been finally secured from all possibility of corruption by careful scholarship and the art of printing, now that new canons of historical inquiry have been developed, and positive science has been born, it is this theory more than any other fact that has prevented the Bible from being historically, and so spiritually, understood. Whatever good therefore it has in times past been the means of doing, it now does little but harm. For if you erect never so strong a building on an insecure and shifting foundation, you sacrifice the superstructure as soon as the foundation gives way; and the imperishable truths of revelation are endangered in the faith of thousands to-day, when they are told that if ascertained Science unquestionably teaches one thing, and

Genesis another, they must throw over the one or the other.

In the interests of faith therefore—for Science may be safely left to take care of herself—it is well for us to ask whether it is needful for us to affirm that the Bible is meant to teach Scientific as well as Religious Truth. For our own part, in common with thousands of fellow-believers in the profound inspiration of the Book, we have no hesitation in holding that it was never meant to teach us any Science at all. In this matter it is reassuring to find ourselves in one solitary point in agreement with so uncompromising a believer in plenary inspiration as Mr. G. H. Pember, who in his curious book on "Earth's Earliest Ages" gives utterance to these sane and weighty words: "[The Scriptures] altogether... avoid contact with the science of men. God does not forbid us to search, as far as we can, into the laws of His universe; but He utterly refuses to aid or accelerate our studies by revelation."[1] We are convinced that the true method of reading the first chapters of Genesis is to look to them for neither science nor history in the usual acceptance of these terms. These glowing pages were surely written from an entirely different standpoint; and it is that standpoint into which we have now to inquire.

IV

In order to do this with effect, let us consider the following facts:—

1. The point of view taken up in the first chapter of Genesis is not that of a scientific man, but of an ordinary devout spectator as he stands gazing at the earth and sea and sky. He views everything from the

[1] Page 29.

standpoint of a plain practical man. The heavens above him, the earth beneath him, the sea before him, are all considered, not in a causal relation to each other, but in relation to himself and to the first origin of things. The sun and moon are to him, what they still are to the average man in his average mood, luminaries that create the day and glorify the night; what they are in themselves he does not seem to ask, nor even to care. The green grass, the air filled with the rush of wings and the tremor of song, the forest and wilderness teeming with savage life, the ocean filled with monsters, are so many phenomena which interest him by their ordered beauty, ranged in ascending sequences of life till they arrive at Man himself at the top. Gazing at all these wonderful things, his mind is eagerly concerned, not with their proximate constitution, but with their ultimate origin, their spiritual import *for him*. What do they mean in relation to his own soul and life and destiny? Who made them? That is the mood in which he approaches the subject, and through it, as through an open door, the Eternal Spirit enters and sheds His light on all things. The word *GOD* leaps to his lips, repeats itself in manifold chords and harmonies, and weaves itself into this fadeless psalm of Creation.

2. Secondly, we notice that in so doing the writer, whoever he may be, is dealing in no sense with the scientific, but with the religious aspect of things. Science can only take note of secondary causes. It has nothing to say about a First Cause. That is a question for religious philosophy. Science takes for granted force, order, matter, motion, and all their inter-relations; and on these postulates it builds up the order and sequences of things in detail. How one thing follows another; how cause produces effect, and the same cause always the same effect; how physical phenomena and organic

life are interdependent,—these are the problems of Science. In other words, to recur to a phrase already used more than once, it asks *When? Where? How?* and when it has obtained a satisfactory answer to these questions, it sinks back satisfied, having no more questions to ask, its function as an instrument of inquiry being completed. But when the scientific faculty—the intellect—has done its work, or rather, in point of time and importance, before it has begun it, the soul with its deeper and more ultimate inquiries comes forward and passionately inquires, *Whence? Why? Whither?* What is the ultimate source of all these things? Why are they here, thus, and so? What moral plan is being developed by their means? What is the great End towards which they all tend? These are the questions of religion, of religious philosophy. And it is to these questions that this first chapter of Genesis gives a reply. It is not Science at all, therefore; it is Religion. Everything is viewed in relation to the Eternal Cause and Source of all things,—a consideration which has, strictly speaking, no place whatever in a scientific argument,—and the name of GOD therefore occurs twenty-nine times in thirty-one verses.

3. We note as a third significant fact that the language and the structure of this chapter do not belong to prose, which is the vehicle of Science, but rather to poetry, which is supremely the vehicle of Religion. This is not easily noted in the unmetrical and literal translation which we hold in our hands; but it is very clear in the original Hebrew. It is seen—

First, in the language employed. The words are full of sonorous music; "rubrical phrases" occur at regular intervals—"and God said," "and it was so," "and God saw," "behold, it was very good," "evening and morning were the first [etc.] day." Apart from this there is a

fine poetic sense shown in the vivid and skilful use of words to describe the various creatures and objects of which the world is made up, and the Divine acts whereby they are brought into being. The dignity and stateliness of the diction are surpassed in no part of the Bible; the whole drama is described in picturesque language, full of glancing lights and shadows; we have but to read with unprejudiced mind to feel instinctively that we are in the hands of one who was a poet and a word-painter, as well as a philosopher and a prophet.

Secondly, in the conception which forms the mental picture presented. The drama of Creation is presented under the simile of a man going forth to his daily work in the morning, and completing a certain self-allotted task before night, as part of a full week's effort. There are the diurnal hours of work, the nightly hours of pause and silent rest; there is the progressive completion of one task after another, and to-morrow the work will be resumed where it was left off to-night; there is the review at the end of each day, with an ever-growing satisfaction at the attainment of yet another stage towards completion, uttered in the evening psalm; and at the close of all, the complete rest of the Sabbath, with its happy outlook on the week's final triumph. How complete and beautiful a picture, free from all controversial elements, is presented to us by such an interpretation, as compared with that which affirms that the stupendous work of Creation was actually completed in six days of twenty-four hours each! How many otherwise insoluble questions are answered before they are raised! How human, and yet how far beyond the reach of human power and resources, looms the figure of the Divine Worker, likening Himself to His creature in His glorious creative activity, so linking us with Him as co-workers, reflecting as we do within

the tiny scale of our time-measurements the shadow of His own achievements in the vast perspectives and on the twilight background of Eternity!

Thirdly, in the topical arrangement of the chapter. One of the final difficulties in the harmonising of this account of Creation, if it is to be taken in its strict literalness, with the order of the creative process as revealed by Science, is the inversion of the series of events in the creation of the sun and the earth. Literally, as we find the story told us in Genesis, the earth precedes the sun in the sequence of existence: the earth is the original; the sun is a subsidiary body, coming into being on the fourth day. It is one of the most certain facts of Astronomy, on the other hand, that the earth and her sister-planets were formed out of great rings of fiery matter thrown off by the molten sun in its wild revolution upon its own axis. Many strenuous endeavours have been made by harmonisers of Science and Revelation to bring these two accounts into something like working agreement. One of the most ingenious is that suggested by the late W. E. Gladstone in his suggestive and reverent little work called "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."[1] He reverted to the hypothesis already touched on, that the writer views the acts of Creation rather from the standpoint of a spectator on earth than of an absolute narrator of ordered detail; and that under the conditions of the case, the sun, though created, would not *appear* till the fourth day, when the air would be free from mist, and land and sea would be defined within clearly marked limits. One of the faults of this method of interpretation is that it is much too subtle to accord with the broad lines in which everything is drawn in this chapter; it is out of all keeping with the straight-

[1] See chap. ii., pp. 26-92; especially p. 78.

forward march of the events; and it has the further fatal demerit of emptying the word *make* in the sixteenth verse of the meaning which it has in all the other places in which it occurs. Why should it be taken as meaning "cause to appear" in this passage, when it means simply to "make" elsewhere? And if, on the other hand, the author really meant to suggest that the sun was made four days after the earth, we are once more face to face with an absolute contradiction between Genesis and Astronomical Physics, and our end is again worse than our beginning.

But let us look a little more closely at the order of the creative process as it is given here. "In Biblical interpretation," writes Prof. R. G. Moulton in his masterly work on "The Literary Study of the Bible," "the question will repeatedly arise, whether a particular passage is to be understood as a simple narrative of facts or an idealised description: in such a case parallelism of clauses will undoubtedly be one factor in the interpretation."[1] Such a test applied to this chapter will bring out the most startling and helpful results for the purpose of our study. The form of parallelism resorted to here is that called the "Envelope Figure," perhaps the most important of all forms, "and the most attractive to the genius of Hebrew poetry," "by which a series of parallel lines running to any length are enclosed between an identical (or equivalent) opening and close."[2] In accordance with this principle it will

[1] "The Literary Study of the Bible. An Account of the leading forms of Literature represented in the Sacred Writings. Intended for English Readers." (London: Isbister & Co., 1896.) The quotation is from p. 70.

[2] Page 53. Compare Psalm viii., where the opening stanza (verse 1 *a*, *b*), which forms the theme of the whole psalm, is repeated at the close (verse 9), the intervening portions being but the expansion of this text. The opening stanza of Southey's "Thalaba" gives us an example from our own literature.

be found that the matter and form of this chapter are arranged in the most minute parallelism. First of all we have the six days of creation arranged in two groups corresponding to each other in a special relation; and then each day is furnished with an opening and closing formula which correspond. The following scheme will at a glance put the whole before the reader's eye.

PARALLELISM OF THE FIRST CHAPTER OF GENESIS.[1]

FIRST GROUP OF DAYS.	SECOND GROUP OF DAYS.
(1) *And God said—* [Creation of Light] *And there was evening and there was morning, one day.*	(4) *And God said—* [Creation of Lights] *And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.*
(2) *And God said—* [Creation of the Firmament dividing waters from waters] *And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.*	(5) *And God said—* [Creation of Life in the Firmament and in the waters] *And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.*
And God said— [Creation of Land] *And God said—* [Creation of Vegetation, climax of inanimate nature] *And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.*	(6) *And God said—* [Creation of Life on Land] *And God said—* [Creation of Man, climax of animate nature] *And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.*

[1] The above is taken from Prof. Moulton's work, p. 72.

A careful examination of this table will show that the first group of three days presents us with three vast empty tenements or habitations; and the second furnishes us with their occupants. The first day gives us the sphere of light (the sky); the fourth day (the first of the second group) tenants it with the sun, moon, and stars. We can thus at once see how it has come about that the heavenly bodies do not appear on the scene till the fourth day; the logical order of grouping made this necessary. The second day brings before us the realm of air and water; the fifth day (the second of the second group) supplies the inhabitants—birds and fishes. The third produces the habitable land; the sixth (again the corresponding day) stocks it with animals and with man. "The idea of this arrangement is on the face of it [not chronological but] literary and logical. It is chosen for its comprehensiveness, its all-inclusive completeness. To declare of every part and atom of Nature that it is the making of God, the author passes in procession the great elements or spheres which the human mind everywhere conceives as making up the world, and pronounces them one by one God's creation. Then he makes an inventory of their entire furniture and contents, and asserts that all these are likewise the work of God. For his purpose—which is to declare the universal creatorship of God and the uniform creaturehood of all Nature—the order and classification is unsurpassed and unsurpassable. With a masterly survey that marks everything and omits nothing, he sweeps the whole category of created existence, collects the scattered leaves into six congruous groups, encloses each in a compact and uniform binding, and then on the back of the numbered and uniform and ordered volumes stamps the great title and declaration that they are one and all, every iot and tittle, and shred,

and fragment, the works of their Almighty Author, and of none beside."[1] "In the beginning"—God; on each step of the way—God; at the end—God; everywhere—God!

If this method of interpreting Genesis is the correct one, it will be seen at once that it finally disposes of all the difficulties arising from a supposed conflict between it and Science. The two accounts of Creation, being on different planes and looking at the same facts from totally distinct points of view, not only do not, but cannot in any way, conflict.[2] There is no room for disagreement where there is no basis for comparison. This frees us from any embarrassment in accepting the results of Biology and Anthropology as to the nature and origin of Man, whatever they may be; and it puts the Scientist out of court if, stepping out of his proper sphere and function, he tries to discredit the inspired Record on the ground that it contains antiquated scientific statements. It matters not for the purposes of the author or authors of the first chapters of Genesis whether the framework of physical ideas in which they clothe their teaching is accurate from the modern point of view. That belongs to the accidents, and not the essentials, of their message, and the message is equally valid, and equally Divine, whatever may be thought of the human vesture of thought in which it is clothed. Through the perishable ideas shines an everlasting

[1] This passage is from a notable paper by the late Prof. Elmslie, in the *Contemporary Review* for December 1887, p. 824, in which the same view as Prof. Moulton adopts is developed with great learning and eloquence.

[2] "For Christians the *facts* of Nature are the *acts* of God. Religion relates these facts to God as their author, Science relates them to one another as integral parts of a visible order" (Aubrey L. Moore, "Science and the Faith," p. 185). The first sentence of this quotation exactly describes the standpoint of the author of the first chapter of Genesis.

light; and when the ideas have passed, the light remains, shining all the more brightly through the broken window of a once universally accepted, but now abandoned theory. If the accounts of Creation given in the first two chapters of Genesis were scientifically correct, therefore, "it would not prove that they were revealed; if they are scientifically crude and inexact, it does not prove that there is no revelation contained in them."[1]

To sum up. From a careful examination of the structure, language, arrangement, and purpose of the first chapter of Genesis, we have come to the conclusion that it is not meant in any way to be a scientific account of the way in which the heavens and the earth were made. It is not Science, it is Theology. Its aim is to establish the Divine origin of all things, and to find the rationale of the Universe in the presence and activity of a Holy, Just, Beneficent, Gracious God. It is written not in order to describe and establish for all time the precise order of events in the process of creation, but to expound their spiritual import. It combats, and it perpetuates, no scientific error. It is not a treatise of physics, but a Hymn of Praise, or, at the lowest, a polemic against Atheism, against Pantheism, against Polytheism, against Demonology, and all manner of heathen witchcrafts. In order to realise its Divine origin, we should contrast it, not with modern scientific speculations, but with rival ancient notions of the origin of the created Universe; and whether we put it alongside the Assyrian, Accadian, Greek, or Egyptian circle of ideas, it will at once spring into unique and imperishable contrast. Nay, more; we have but to compare it with modern religio-philosophical attempts to enter into the higher aspects

[1] "Revelation and the Bible," by Dr. R. F. Horton, p. 31.

of the Universe to find it springing into lofty and unmistakable antithesis. Agnosticism pales its ineffectual fires before the still radiance of this wonderful Hymn ; Positivism falls silent just where its sonorous chords begin to sound ; Pessimism sinks into shamed silence in the presence of its exultant refrain, "Behold, it was very good." It is the world's morning-chant of the goodness and the beauty of the Creator's activity in the making of all that was, and is, and is to come ; and to the world's evening in the dim future, it will continue to voice the highest and devoutest mood of humanity in looking at the earthly home in which it dwells, and works, and aspires.

'The Elohist presents us with Man in the making; the Jehovist with Man in the marring."

Chapter II.—Genesis and the Creation—The Second Account

The Jehovist and the Elohist—Story of the Fall—Principles of Interpretation—History, Tradition, Legend, Myth—A Myth may be "inspired"—Contrast between Scriptural and Ethnic Myths—Five "Fall-myths" in Jehovist's Account—Some Deductions.

I

IT is now allowed by nearly all serious students of the structure and composition of the Book of Genesis that it contains two independent accounts of the Creation, written at different times and from diverse points of view, the two having been brought together by an unknown editor for a special purpose. The first is that contained in the first chapter and the first four and a half verses in the second chapter; the second beginning at that point, running on to chap. iii. 24. These two passages are easily distinguishable from one another in subject-matter, in diction, and in the fundamental ideas that underlie them. Their full treatment belongs to the general question of the composite character of the Pentateuch; here we can only touch on such salient points as are essential for our own purpose. With the general drift and special structure of the first, or Elohist, account (so called because the author consistently calls the Creator by the name Elohim) we have already dealt in the preceding chapter. We now address ourselves to the second or Jehovist account, so called because the writer calls the Creator by the name Jehovah-Elohim.

In reading these two versions of the Creation it is at once obvious that the centre of interest is changed. The logical order, the stately movement, the progressive development of the drama of Creation that characterises the first account, as well as its poetical and balanced diction, are now exchanged for an entirely different method of treatment. The Elohist is bent on putting before us the general sequence of the creative process as a series of phenomena flowing from the Unseen, and filling space and time with the glory and goodness of God; and Man appears at the end of the series in his own appropriate place, the earthly climax to which all leads. The central figure of the drama is the Divine Being, and even Man derives his chief dignity because he is the most perfect embodiment of the Divine Nature.[1] In the Jehovist account all this is changed. There is no attempt to trace the upward process from the formless void; there is no mention of the "days" of creation; and there are several features which are inconsistent in detail with what has been clearly and unambiguously stated in the first chapter. For it is here clearly implied that Man was made before either plant or herb or animal existed:[2] "And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground" (suggesting that plant-life was the result of human cultivation); "but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground" (this idea seeming to be the counterpart in the mind of the Jehovist of the "void and darkness" of primal chaos in the first account). The Elohist proceeds on the supposition that the creation of Woman was contemporaneous with that

[1] Gen. i. 26, 27.
[2] *Ibid.*, ii. 5, 6: cf. verses 18–20.

of Man;[1] the Jehovist describes her as a kind of afterthought on the part of the Creator and suggests that she was made to supply Adam's failure to find a fitting helpmeet among the beasts of the field,[2] the method of creation being from the "rib" taken from Adam's side. In the first account Man is shown to be the last link in the chain of being, supreme in the possession of God-likeness, and so fitted for the lordship of the earthly order. In the second, he is still the creature for whom all things exist, but his place in the serial order of ascending life is not suggested, and the horizon within which he moves is more limited. In the first, his home is the vast creation, arched by the dome of the sky, in which sun, moon, and stars perform their orderly functions, and filled with teeming orders of life, vegetable and animal; all having been completely prepared, down to the last detail, before Man came to enjoy and to rule. In the second, his place in the world is determined by a series of adjustments after he has arrived on the scene: the planting of the garden, the creation of the animal orders, the formation of the woman who was to be his helpmeet.[3] All this makes it clear that the mere physical order of creation is subordinate in the mind of the writer to some other end. This end is to exhibit Man not so much as the intellectual head of creation, but as a moral being who is on his trial. We can thus see at once why the Jehovist is so careless about much that the Elohist considers of vital importance, and why the dramatic movement of the story is centred not in the world without but in the world within. The horizon shrinks to the limits of Eden; but in so doing it intensifies our interest by concentrating our attention on the spiritual drama of Man's discipline, ending in

[1] Gen. i. 27.
[2] *Ibid.*, ii. 21–25.
[3] Cf. Gen. ii. 5, 8-10, 18-25.

lapse from "his first estate." If the earlier story is told that we may realise Man's *normal* relation to the Universe which is the theatre of his existence, the second is told that we may understand how that relation has become *abnormal*. We learn from the Elohist what Man, made in the image of God, was meant to be, the climax of creation; the Jehovist tells us what Man is, the victim of moral maladjustment, rebellion, and sin. Thus the two accounts, if diverse in their incidental details, are mutually complementary in their subject-matter, and fittingly find their place together as a full description of the complex nature of Man, and of his actual relations both to his Creator and to his environment. They enable us, in a word, to understand how Man is at once at the head of things, and is yet pursued by the sense of failure and deposition. Man's dignity is the lesson of the first; Man's fall, of the second; and a full doctrine of Man must include both lessons.

II

LET us now turn our attention more particularly to the Jehovist's account of Man's primal condition and Fall into sin.

His teaching is that Man was created in a state of innocence, and lived in some kind of conscious communion with his Maker. In a real sense, however dim, *he knew God*. By Him he was placed in a special environment, in which he was not only in unison with the Divine Being, but with all things around him. There was none of that spirit of unrest and discord within him which is his distinctive moral characteristic at present. Work was pleasant to him. All things were fair in his eyes. He lived at peace with himself, with the world, and with God. One thing only there was in his Eden

of innocence and blessedness that spread a possible shadow on his mind. In the garden in which he was placed there was a tree, called the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil,"[1] from the fruit of which he was forbidden to eat, under penalty of "death."[2] The story goes on to say that a "serpent" tempted the two human beings, who then represented the race, to disobey this command, under the false promise of a sudden development of their natures towards the Divine. The woman succumbed first. She ate of the fruit, and having done so without any apparent harm, she persuaded her husband to follow her example. We are then told how there fell on both a sense of shame and guilt, which was intensified when next they became aware of the presence of God in their garden, so that they endeavoured to hide themselves in the midst of the trees; how they were convicted of their sin; and of the punishment which was finally passed on their disobedience. The Divine judgment was pronounced; they were expelled from the fair garden in which they had been so innocent and happy, and sent forth discredited into the inhospitable earth, to take their place in the struggle of life with the brute creation, no longer as the vicegerents of God, but as outcasts from the presence of the Lord. Before, however, the last word is spoken, we have a glimpse of a merciful promise of redemption that was to be wrought out in the course of the ages by the "Seed" of the woman, who was to crush the "seed" of the serpent. This faint and almost formless point of light, shining dimly, like an evening-star, in the twilight of Man's Fall, is explicable only in the after-glow of the later Revelation. By itself it is nothing; but, seen in the light of the Gospel, it has ever been recognised as the starting-point of the redemptive process which was

[1] Gen. iii. 5. [2] *Ibid.*, verse 3.

consummated on Calvary and at the empty tomb of Christ. "The fact that evil was present, although its nature and its curse were but imperfectly discerned; the fact that salvation was possible and promised, although the manner of its accomplishment was not indicated as yet, or but in the vaguest manner: these were the truths which constituted the beginnings of God's revelation to Man."[1]

This is the Jehovist's account of the Origin and Fall of Man from primal innocence—a story which has captivated and held the mind of man for untold ages, which has been the background of almost all the religious thinking of Christendom, the theme of some of its highest poetry and speculation, the soil in which its deepest sentiments have quickened and ripened, the quarry out of which has been hewn one of the corner-stones of its theological systems. The question how far the New Science of Man has made this story incredible or obsolete is thus no mere idle one; it is deserving of the closest and most reverent study; and in approaching it we should be as free from a reckless spirit of iconoclasm and destructiveness, as from the spirit of foolish conservatism, which clings to the husks of truth with blind tenacity because it is so afraid of losing the kernel. The position we would take up is that the spiritual import of the story of Eden is not to be in any way confounded with its form, nor identified with its historicity in the usual sense of the term; that it represents a fact of the profoundest importance ann the most far-reaching consequences, whose truth is unaffected by any theory we may be constrained to form as to the literary interpretation of the story which is its vehicle; and that the permanent teaching of this portion of Sacred

[1] "The Development of Revelation," by E. Reeves Palmer, M.A., p. 61.

Scripture may be best retained in the present day by the frankest acceptance of the results of criticism which, in emancipating us from the tyranny of the letter, leave us free to search with more hope of realising the power of the spirit.

III

THE position of the average religious mind in relation to the story of Eden may be paralleled by such a case as would have existed had we all been brought up to believe that the Christian Faith was indissolubly bound up with the historicity of our Lord's parables. There is nothing in the mere form of these parables which negatives such a notion. In many cases the incidents are such as might have taken place at any time; many of them must have occurred again and again. Let us imagine that this presupposition of the historicity of the parables had been firmly fixed in the minds of devout believers, and that suddenly a "higher critic" ventured the statement that the substance of their teaching was in no wise bound up with the reality of these incidents; that as a matter of fact none of them ever occurred; but that this made no difference, their spiritual import being the same. We can easily imagine the shock which such a statement would cause to the faith of thousands of earnest souls, who would revolt against the notion that our Lord should condescend to use "fictions" as the vehicle of His teaching; some would doubtless go so far as to say that such an idea, if established, would for ever destroy their faith in His infallibility as a Teacher. Never having had our faith bound up with such a childish theory of Inspiration, we can afford to smile at the unnecessary alarm which the breaking up of such a theory would unquestionably

cause. We rightly say: "It matters not at all to us whether the incidents used in our Lord's parables for the conveyance of Divine truth be historical facts or charming inventions of fancy. The question at issue is not the objective reality of the stories, but the character of the lessons they convey, which are exactly the same whether these stories are made up of fact or fiction."

Fortunately we have been spared any such needless difficulty in regard to the New Testament; but that we have fallen into it inadvertently in regard to portions of the Old Testament is a demonstrable fact. Partly owing to imperfect knowledge of the distinction in form between Hebrew prose and poetry,—an ignorance until comparatively recent times almost universal, and rendered almost inevitable by the mechanical way in which the Authorised Version is printed, failing as it does to make any distinction between the historical and the poetical books,[1] and between narrations of fact and the lyrical passages so often imbedded in them,[2]—and partly owing to an entire failure to recognise the possibility of imparting spiritual truth through unhistoric media,—we have been stubbornly unwilling to believe that the early records in Genesis contain legendary or mythical elements, on the assumption that the truths they teach are inseparably bound up with the literal accuracy of the stories in which these truths are embodied.

[1] The Book of Job, now universally allowed to be a drama, but until recently believed to be entirely historical in form as well as in substance, is a case in point. Any one reading Prof. Moulton's metrical version of the book will at once see how essentially poetic and dramatic is its structure. Of course this does not in any way affect the question as to whether there was such a historical personage as Job.

[2] Cf. the story of the sun and moon "standing still in the valley of Aijalon in the A.V. and in the R.V.

There is no reason in the nature of things why this should be so. Whether the Fall of Man as a spiritual fact in the history of the race, and as an explanation of the origin and nature and universality of sin, be a true doctrine, is a question which, we may be sure, is not bound up with any such doubtful hypothesis; if it be a fact at all, it must have other evidence in support of it besides these immeasurably ancient and impressive, but not necessarily infallible, narratives. Even as it is, we should not really believe the story of the Fall unless it interpreted our inner consciousness of sin as nothing else has ever done; and though we may have to give up belief in the historicity of the narrative as it has come down to us, that need no more disturb our acceptance of its teaching, than we are bound to give up faith in Jesus Christ because He chose fictitious narratives, that is, parables, as media for conveying His teaching concerning the Kingdom of God.

The question then is—How are we to account for the existence of these stories, and why were they used for the embodiment of religious truth?

We find that the annals of mankind invariably change their form in well-defined stages as we travel back into extreme antiquity. First, we have what we call history which is a more or less accurate statement of facts, told in their chronological order, and in their mutual relations of cause and effect. Behind this comes the region of tradition, in which again we have a more or less accurate presentation of facts, intermingled with products of imagination in which they have been overlaid, but not altogether submerged, this complex whole having been handed down orally through one or more generations till it was at last fixed in writing. Back of this again is the penumbral region of legend, in which the imagination has worked so long on the

nucleus of fact that it has altogether permeated it, and it is not always possible to distinguish between the real soil of history and the overgrowth of fancy which has struck its roots through and through it. And then behind all this we have the most ancient of all forms of past records, which is technically called *myth*, in which we have only the vaguest—if any—guarantee of historicity in the substance of the story, but which is still a genuine attempt to preserve the memory of some real fact or event of human experience. It is in these myths that we find imbedded the primitive thoughts and beliefs of men, like fossils in the strata of the earth. The study of myths, therefore, is one of the most interesting though difficult means of arriving at the earliest contents of belief in the human race.

Now, we are familiar with the thought that it is possible to possess an inspired version of history, by which we are to understand not a perfectly infallible account of facts in their bare reality, but a story of events from a spiritual point of view, in which their inner Divine meaning is clearly brought to light. The contemporary chronicles of the New and Old Testaments are typical examples of this class of literature. A true theory of Inspiration does not affirm that minor inaccuracies may not have crept into the narrative; but it claims that the spiritual import of the events recorded is given so that we can understand their place and bearing in the development of revealed truth. The same is true of those portions of the history of Israel which are traditional in their origin, or partly so (for written history and tradition are often inextricably intermingled), such as the story of the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert, and the conquest of Canaan. Here there is more room for error in matters of detail; but it is certain that the main stream of narrative is

historical, and the spiritual meaning of the events is forcibly and vividly driven home on the mind of the reader. In the earlier stories of Genesis, from the call of Abraham to the death of Joseph, we are technically in the region of legend, though it is quite possible that scraps of contemporary history (*i.e.* in Gen. xiv.) are contained in the narrative, and the vivid and sober character of the whole is more than suggestive of substantial historicity. No one indeed who ponders these wonderful biographies with an open and unprejudiced mind can help feeling that the authentic note of inspiration strikes the ear, conveying as they do, through the *media* of impressive personalities hanging on the verge of history, matchless and ennobling spiritual truths. If these figures are idealised, as we know them, in the imagination of later ages, they carry with them a profound conviction of reality, and the message of their lives and their faith is imperishably clear and persuasive.

IV

Now, we ask, why should we be ready to go so far and refuse the one step remaining? Why should history, tradition, and legend be legitimate channels for the imparting of spiritual truth, and myth alone be shut out? Is it likely that the Spirit of Truth should have condescended to transform these later forms of recording men's impressions of the past, and use them for the progressive revelation of His will and purpose in the redemption of men, and have stopped short here? We have seen how the earliest speculations of the human mind regarding the first origins of creation are lifted, in the first chapter of Genesis, from the trough of imbecility and uncleanness into which they had run

in the theogonies and cosmologies of the heathen nations, so that all the errors of polytheism, materialism, and pessimism are, for the religious mind, for ever dead and buried. Is it not at least conceivable that the same Spirit, acting on the mythical materials ever present in the primitive imaginations of Man, should uplift, redeem, and sanctify such of these as were suited for His purpose, and transform them into fitting channels for revealed truth concerning the facts that lie at the roots of our spiritual being?

This is exactly what we hold has been done with the earliest narratives in Genesis. It is not quite accurate, as has well been pointed out by Dr. Dale,[1] to speak of them as mere myths, "for an ordinary myth is the growth of imagination uncontrolled by Divine revelation," and, we might add, because they represent, as we believe, facts and occurrences of which the shell only is mythical. But the stories have a mythical form, and, so far, they must be interpreted in the same way. "We have to ask, What are the truths which they embodied? How were they understood by the people who found in them the expression of their religious faith?"[2] Having ascertained these points, we have further to ask, What is there of permanent meaning for us, as the possessors of the final revelation in Jesus Christ, in these earliest *media* of religious enlightenment as it vanishes in the unfathomable mists of remotest antiquity?

In order to answer these questions, we have to compare this story of Eden and the Fall with the parallel accounts of the same events in other ancient literatures. During recent years it has been discovered that some such

[1] See "Christian Doctrine," Note T, "The Accounts in Genesis of the Creation of Man," pp. 322-4.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 224.

story is to be found in the records of several if not of all Eastern nations. Notably there is a Babylonian fragment, forming the third tablet in the Creation series, which has curious resemblances to the third chapter of Genesis. This was first deciphered by the eminent English Assyriologist Mr. W. St. C. Boscawen, and is described by him in an article on the "Babylonian Legend of the Serpent Tempter" in the October, 1890, number of the *Babylonian and Oriental Record*.[1] Of it he says, "It is almost impossible not to see in this fragment the pith of the story of the Fall, while the last line at once brings Merodach before us as the one who would defeat the tempter and restore the fallen."[2] There is a common framework in the two narratives (and we might add that the same is true of others in a lesser degree), which clearly points to the conclusion that, so far from being deliberately composed fables (these myths arose before the age of conscious invention[3]), the true key to their solution

[1] Here is the fragment in question :—

"The great gods, all of them determiners of fate,
They entered, and, deathlike, the god Sar filled.
In sin one with the other in compact joins.
The command was established in the garden of the god.
The Asnan (fruit) they broke in two,
Its stalk they destroyed ;
The sweet juice which injures the body.
Great is their sin. Themselves they exalted.
To Merodach their Redeemer their fate he appointed."

[2] See a most suggestive treatment of the whole question in Prof. Herbert Ryle's "Early Narratives of Genesis," especially pp. 21 ff. ; also pp. 42 ff.

[3] "The formation of myth ceases with the times in which the nature-religions are shaped and modified by the peoples in naïve freshness and vivacity. Where a religion, regarded as fully matured, has become an occult doctrine in the hands of priests and scribes, there may very well be a further artificial development of myth, but there is no longer any genuine creation of it. The proper time for forming myths is, as Mr. Max Müller has correctly maintained, when the languages are growing. Myth and language rise together" (Schultz, "Old Testament Theology," Vol. I., p. 23).

is that they are veiled and fanciful forms of handing down primeval beliefs. As such they have a common origin. We are to look for this common origin not in any one of the extant forms, certainly not in the theory that the Jewish form is derived from the Assyrian, but in an original tradition from which all the allied versions were derived at a time prior to the dispersion of the Semitic races from the parent stock. "The original tradition, marred by the intricacies of a bewildering polytheism, was received from their Mesopotamian ancestors by the founders of the original branch of the Semitic race."[1]

But if the Scriptural account of the Fall is parallel in form to those of other nations, its religious teaching is essentially different in tone and quality. We might even begin on lower levels, comparing it with them in an artistic and literary sense, and even so we should find the outward similarity fading into a striking contrast. The Babylonian fragment is immeasurably inferior, even from this point of view, to the story of Eden, which is unapproachable among these creation-legends or myths for vividness and naturalness of narrative, for the human touches that abound in it, and for its general purposefulness and clear dramatic movement. Without making any doubtful deductions from that fact, we are on safe ground in drawing attention to the extraordinary difference in the spiritual standpoint of Genesis. While the Ethnic narratives are, as it has been well put, "full of extravagant detail, mixing their nucleus of fact with the stories of the gods and heroes of polytheism, Divine inspiration has filled the sacred narrative with a totally different spirit." Between the Bible and other sacred books of the East there is all the "distance of one of

[1] "Early Narratives of Genesis," p. 42.

the most tremendous revolutions which has ever been effected in human beliefs."[1]

This difference represents the gap between an inspired and an uninspired piece of literature. We may say that one of the chief services wrought for us by the Higher Criticism in regard to this portion of Scripture is that it, as it were, takes us into the very laboratory of Inspiration, and enables us to see the Holy Spirit at His sacred work. We know the character of the materials with which He dealt—the crude, confused, low-thoughted mass of primitive belief in the minds of men. And we know how out of this degraded, almost senseless, jumble of legend and myth, His influence on the mind of the seers who were His human *media* resulted in a version of these early beliefs purified from all grossness, sensuality, polytheism, and pessimism, and enshrining the noblest teaching concerning the nature of God, of Man, and of the sin that marred his life and arrested his development almost at the beginning of his career.[2] The one point of departure

[1] "We must keep that word [Sin] if we would understand the problem thus presented to the Hebrew mind. If we would look at the aberrations of humanity as imperfection, if we would see in Sin, with the non-moral Greek, a falling short from an ideal to which the race was continually making an approach, these repeated allegories of explanation are needless. Man struggles upward; he began in imperfection and will end in imperfection; there is no need to imagine a Fall. And yet the idea of a Fall haunts the imagination even of a race to which it was uncongenial. Legends of an Eden, of a Fall of the Angels, are found in the Hellenic Genesis [*i.e.* the theogony of Hesiod, and in Empedocles], left as it is in its unedited, unharmonised condition, and we are forced to recognise as we compare the two that the truth which occupied the horizon of the Hebrew seer found a place even in that of the race least inclined to ponder or to accept it" (Julia Wedgwood, "The Message of Israel," pp. 128, 129; see also footnotes).

[2] "The mythical ideas about the origin of the world and of man, held in common by the primitive Semites, naturally took in each tribe a particular form, according to the cast of its spirit and religion. Thus in Israel too the spirit which sustained and developed

which marks the new from the old attitude towards this account of the Fall of Man lies in the literary treatment of the story. Its essential attitude towards the doctrine underlying it is in no wise modified.[1] Instead of vacillating, as the older commentators were forced to do, between a pragmatic and an allegorical interpretation, in which we are now dealing with symbolical conceptions (the "tree of life," the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," the "rib," etc.), and now with geographical details (such as the attempt to identify two of the rivers of Eden with the Tigris and the Euphrates, and the other two with the Indus and the Nile, which would have made the "garden" as large as a continent[2]), we frankly affirm that the value of the narrative lies not at all in its literal accuracy, but in the revelation of moral and spiritual truth which it embodies. Here is a pictorial representation of the profound fact that there was a time when sin was not in the world, and that at a given moment sin entered into it. If not exactly in the precise historical manner here depicted, probably in a very dim and unrecognised manner, in keeping with the undeveloped condition of the spiritual nature in Man, the first conscious transgression against the dawning Higher Law of the Spirit

Israel's religion could appropriate such myths as raw material, and saturate them with its true and enduring beliefs concerning God, the world, and man" (Schultz, "Old Testament Theology," p. 24).

[1] "Nothing but confusion of thought," as Principal Tulloch in his work on the "Doctrine of Sin" says, "can arise from attempting to fix a definite meaning to the accessories of the incident, all the genuine meaning of which arises from the moral portrait it sets before us. This moral portrait is a true expression of the religious thought of the Hebrews, and it is their thought as to sin which we are in search of, . . . whatever may be made of the literary vesture in which that thought is expressed. Here as elsewhere, the reality of the thought is not dependent on the view which we take of the narrative forms in which it is conveyed" (p. 67).

[2] Dr. Horton's "Revelation and the Bible," pp. 39, 40.

took place; and here its implicit contents are unfolded for the enlightenment and guidance of the whole world. We have travelled very far from the mental and moral position occupied by the thinker who wrote this story in the form in which we have it here; but we have done little more, so far as the doctrine of Sin is concerned, than complete and carry to a clearer and fuller conception the suggestions here given us of the nature and consequences of moral transgression. We may say without exaggeration that the story of Eden is the kernel out of which the full doctrine of sin developed in the New Testament is unfolded, and that from this point of view it contains nothing out of harmony with the teachings of our Lord and His apostles.

V

THE Genesis account of the Fall is usually supposed to end with the Expulsion from Eden, or rather it would be more accurate to say from the "garden" which was "in Eden."[1] This is to miss the entire spiritual meaning of the subsequent narratives, which culminate in the Flood and the Tower of Babel. For the whole of this early Jehovistic literature is really an editorial handling of legends derived probably from many sources, with a view of showing the progressive ravages of sin in the subsequent history of the race. Genesis in fact presents us with the story, not of one, but of many Falls into evil, though, strangely enough, the first step of the series has so taken hold of the imagination of the world as to almost entirely exclude the others from view—possibly because of its superior vividness and detail as a story.

The second Fall is that of Cain. Here we are taught

[1] Gen. ii. 8.

by implication rather than by distinct enunciation, the propensity of evil to repeat itself from one generation to another. The sin of Adam and Eve is followed by that of their eldest son. Disobedience to the Supreme Being in them ends in wrong between man and man in him; once the relation between the Creator and His creatures becomes abnormal, it breeds an abnormal relation among themselves also. And the character of the wrong committed by Cain illustrates the hereditary nature of evil as a tendency. His sin is not primarily in the murder of Abel, nor does it lie, as certain commentators have alleged, in the fact that he offered a sacrifice "of the fruits of the ground."[1] It is in something that lies back of that, in his attitude towards God, which has its natural result in a spirit of jealousy and envy against his brother, and which issues in the crime of murder. "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another: not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."[2] In other words, hatred against our fellow-men is the outcome of rebellion against God. What began with the eating

[1] What more natural than that each should bring to God the results of his own labour—Cain of the fruits he had grown, and Abel of the firstlings of his flock? "The ancient views that an offering of animals was preferred above an offering of the fruits of the earth, or that Abel had more correctly performed the ritual of the offering, are mere guess-work" (Prof. Ryle, "Early Narratives of Genesis," p. 68), and are clearly the result of the effort to read into the narrative a later development of the outward forms of worship, out of all keeping with the primitive character of the story. It is also out of harmony with the explanation of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "*By faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Heb. xi. 4). The Jehovist, as Prof. Ryle says (p. 69), "wishes to draw attention to the inner motives and to the moral characters of the offerers, by which alone the value of their offerings could be really distinguished."

[2] 1 John iii. 11, 12.

of the forbidden fruit in one generation, ends with the slaying of a brother in the next.

One of the consequences of the Fall of Cain is the bifurcation of the human race into two genealogies, one of which represents the line of continuous and progressive degeneration, and the other the line in which the—so far, implicit—forces of redemption are treasured up. The next step in this degeneration is found in the fifth generation. Obscure as the Song of Lamech is, it clearly enough marks another step in the downward career of the race. It is suggestive also that the degenerating branch of the human family is in the line of social and industrial civilisation, while that identified with the redemptive process is attached to a quiet pastoral life. Cain was not only a husbandman, but a city-builder, while Abel was a shepherd.[1] Lamech is represented as the first polygamist, and at the same time the father of the originators of the various arts ;[2] and he it is who figures next as the type of a fallen being, carrying on into a more developed system of blood-revenge the crime of isolated murder associated with his father Cain.[3] "Again the spirit of inventive industry betrays a deep connection with evil ; the father of this Hebrew Vulcan[4]

[1] Gen. iv. 2 : cf. verse 17.
[2] *Ibid.*, 19-22.
[3] *Ibid.*, 23, 24.
[4] The curious similarity between the names of Tubalcain and his brothers and those of Vulcan and Apollo, and the similarity of their respective functions, has been given as a reason for believing that we have in this legend a suggestion of a cognate source for Hebrew and Greek myths, at least in this particular instance. "We may here conceive of some reference to a common stock of traditions busy with dim memories of dawning civilisation" (Julia Wedgwood, "The Message of Israel," p. 114, who points out in this relation the striking contrast between the genius of the Greek and Hebrew mind, in the tendency of the latter to maintain a clear distinction between the Divine and the human : Jabal, Jubal, and Tubalcain are simply men, while the originators of the arts among the former are raised to the level of the superhuman, and appear as gods).

profits by the discovery of iron to indulge a spirit of fierce revenge; and we seem to come on the trace of a new impulse given to hatred with a new facility for its achievement. The connection of knowledge and evil, visible from the first, seems again emphasised; the impulses which profit most by the gain of civilisation, it would seem, are those which end in crime."[1]

The next step in the downward career of the human race is that obscurely associated with the Fall of the angels, in the legend of the alliance between the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men."[2] It is needless to enter here into the various expositions of this passage. The most plausible view is that it contains a very ancient, probably parallel, account of the original Fall, out of an altogether different source from that which stands at the head of human history in the Jehovist's account of Eden, inserted here by the compiler for the sake of emphasising the complex forces at work in the deterioration of Man's spiritual and moral nature. "The temptation here comes from beings of a higher race; the entrance of sin and death is ascribed to the abandonment by the 'daughters of men' of the position which God has allotted to them."[3] Its purpose is to "illustrate, from the earliest traditions, the current belief as to the enormity of the wickedness that prevailed in the prehistoric centuries."[4] This particular form of sin is suggested as the cause of the hopeless condition into which the race had fallen, necessitating the drastic remedy of a universal Flood as the only way of preserving the whole family of Man from final and irremediable ruin.[5]

[1] "Message of Israel," p. 112. Cf. "The tree of knowledge is again the tree of death" (p. 113).
[2] Gen. vi. 1-6.
[3] Ryle, "Early Narratives of Genesis," pp. 94, 95.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[5] Gen. vi. 5, 6

Its religious purpose seems to be the enforcement of the principle that unnatural and unequal alliances between men and nations are among the most devastating sources of evil in the world. "That the sons of God see the daughters of men that they are fair, is the history of many a fall, and we may sometimes fancy that, this temptation once more removed, the path of humanity would be almost clear; directly or indirectly it is the source of all the heaviest evil that afflicts the sons and daughters of men; and pondering over its wide ramifications and irresistible sway, we might well be tempted to believe that we have here not merely an important specimen of human sin, but the source of all."[1]

The story of the Tower of Babel completes the cycle of Fall-legends in the Jehovist's account of primitive Man. It deals with the problem, which must have greatly perplexed the ancients, of the dispersion of mankind, and the degradation of language, meant to be the bridge of communication between man and man, into a veritable barrier against the interchange of thought and fellowship. "The familiar story of the Tower of Babel supplied to such primitive questionings an answer suited to the comprehension of a primitive time."[2] It connected the dispersion of mankind, and its division into hostile communities, diverse in tongue and so in almost everything else, with another great sin—the sin of intellectual pride and self-sufficiency. Whether we identify the Tower with that of Bis-Nimrud at Borsippa, which stands at a little distance south-west from Babylon, on the west bank of the Euphrates, or with the great temple of Merodach within Babylon itself, the point of connection appears to be the Babylonian study of the stars. "We should look on their astrology as an ideal

[1] Julia Wedgwood, "The Religious Message of Israel," p. 119.
[2] Ryle, "Early Narratives of Genesis," p. 128.

attempt to mount to heaven, and once more to become 'as gods.'" [1] It is meant to illustrate the sin of the intellect as a barrier both to human unity and to Divine fellowship.

VI

SUMMARISING our outlook on the successive stages of the Fall of Man, several reflections are naturally suggested as the outcome of our study.

1. We see the persistence of the tendency to sin when once its destructive and debasing power is permitted to lay hold of the heart. From generation to generation it goes on repeating and unfolding itself in ever-widening ranges, descending from father to son, and spreading from circle to circle of human relationships, till its clinging poison has penetrated to the very roots of being, and the one remedy is to make a clean sweep of the race that has been so hopelessly contaminated.[2] Incidentally we are taught that, once sin has laid hold of a man or a community, there is no principle of self-recovery inherent in human nature which will enable it to throw off the infection by its own spiritual resources. It tends ever more and more to lay hold of its victims, and to hurry them from one form of iniquity to another, till it has entrenched itself irremediably in the heart. "And the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." [3]

2. Another feature in the teaching of the Jehovist is the variety of the ways in which sin attacks and gains entrance into the soul. Its primary and ubiquitous characteristic is its contamination of the will, as

[1] "Message of Israel," p. 122.
[2] This is the moral significance of the tradition of the Flood.
[3] Gen. vi. 5.

the source of obedience to the Divine law ; this is the form of the first temptation in Eden. In Cain, the centre of the affections is tainted ; the clear current of love is made turbid and swollen with all the passions of the murderer. In the case of Lamech, the same evil is brought into relation with advancing civilisation, which, while it enriches human life by the discovery of weapons and all the witchery of the arts, yet fails in itself to purify the affections of men, but rather facilitates the development of evil passions by providing them with more adequate means of satisfaction. The "Fall of the Angels" suggests evil as entering through the doorway of unnatural sexual relationships, and that the lower side of these relationships has more power to work evil than the higher has to redeem. Finally the story of Babel illustrates the degrading effects of godless intellectual development and scientific research, when used not for the spiritual perfection of our nature, but for mere purposes of self-sufficiency and the gratification of impossible ambitions. So is the power of evil over the threefold activity of human nature—the will, the affections, and the intellect—brought home to the mind in a series of vivid cartoons whose mythical or legendary envelope has no power to cloud the forcible and striking spiritual lessons they enforce. Whatever their value as history, they are imperishably true in the lessons they teach and the light they throw on the nature, the ravages, and terrible consequences of wrongdoing.

3. A consideration of the subject would be incomplete, however, without a glance at the other side of the picture. The writer whom we call the Jehovist is no mere pessimist, as we have already suggested ; and the story of the successive degradations of the human race is told not with any view of inspiring despair as to the

condition of humanity, but in order to bring into brighter relief the promise of Divine Redemption which is interwoven with his narrative. In close connection with the utterance of doom on Adam and on Cain, as well as with the sombre description of the hopeless corruption of the world before the Flood, we have the offer of pardon and the prospect of renewal. This is to come through the woman's seed in the first case, and as the story is developed we are kept in view of the line of descent along which the process of redemption is to be achieved. In the genealogy of Seth we have enshrined the principle of the spiritual survival of the fittest. God has never left Himself without witness in the world; among the worst communities there are to be found men who are not given over as their fellows are to hopeless sin, but have kept alive the instinct of obedience to a higher law, and a sense of their relationship with the great Father of Mankind. Just as the later books of the Old Testament bring before us the broad stream of national history through which the redemptive purpose of God was gradually accomplished, till in the fulness of time the Eternal Son was made manifest in the flesh; so in this, the earliest, we are never out of sight of some great character who, amid the deepening shadows of human corruption, still remains true to the highest he knows, and reflects some of the glory of God. Abel, Enoch, and Noah are the fixed stars in the firmament of prehistoric time—the first triplet in the glorious succession of spiritual heroes who have never suffered the night of sin to be without some ray of light, and who are the beacon-lights of our fallen race, brightening the dim hills of time, and heralding the time when the dawn shall come and the shadows flee away. And what glorious figures they are! How grandly they

stand out among the prehistoric figures of other nations —the lustful demigods of Greece, the half-human monsters of Asia, the magnificent but coarse shadows that hang on the horizon of time in the Far North! Abel, the type of innocence and devoutness, appearing and passing away from the scene in an act beginning with the smoke of sacrifice, and ending with the blood that speaketh to all generations more eloquently than all the wars of history, because it is the blood of martyrdom; Enoch, whose gentle spirit passed over the world's ken like a breath, a perfume from higher regions, and which is gone like a breath, a perfume, leaving a sweetness as of prayer behind it; Noah, the type of the righteous man, living a true and noble life in the midst of unholy surroundings—the first instance of that astonishing phenomenon, a man who can create his own spiritual environment, and maintain an inherent grandeur of character though all the influences that play on him from without are deteriorative and poisonous. The vision of such men on the very verge of time must have had a profound influence on the national life of which they were the first heroes, purifying men's morals, lifting up their thoughts above the sordid present, and giving them a spiritual ideal of incomparable nobility and beauty. And for us they are a witness to the principle of spiritual progress, which, while it has had many a night of eclipse and period of painful pause and retrogression, has never failed in the end to reassert itself in the chequered career of humanity, but has from the earliest times passed on through an unbroken succession to the climax of all excellence in Jesus Christ—that perfect flower of the great Tree of Life, whose roots clasp the foundations of the earth, and whose "leaves are for the healing of the nations."

"All great ruins are but a name for greatness in ruins; and we shall see the magnitude of the structure in that of the ruin made by its fall. So it is with man. Our most veritable, though saddest, impressions of his greatness, as a creature, we shall derive from the magnificent ruin he displays."
HORACE BUSHNELL.

Chapter III.—The Biblical Doctrine of Sin

Results so far—Later Development of Biblical Doctrine of Sin—Old Testament Terms for Sin—Teaching of Christ—Pauline Doctrine—Biblical Exposition of Mystery of Evil summarised—The Redemptive Idea.

I

WE have now examined the outward structure and inward significance of the early narratives of Genesis,—those relating to the Creation and the Fall,—and have arrived at the conclusion that their value to us does not in any way depend on a literal interpretation of their contents. If, as until recently was thought to be the case, they were found to be pragmatic versions of historical facts, that would not prove them to be inspired; and the real element of inspiration that permeates them is in no way affected now that we have come to the belief that they contain as their substratum a basis of myth and legend of little or no historical, though of great anthropological and spiritual, value.

This leaves us free to enter with unbiassed minds into the permanent teaching on the nature of sin, and the means of recovery, of which these early narratives contain the germinal doctrine; and to co-ordinate them with the later and more fully developed teaching of the

Bible concerning the same subject. We shall then be in a position to gauge the relation of this teaching to the Evolutionary doctrine of Man, and how far that theory necessitates a modification in our ideas of the nature of sin, and of the Christian faith concerning Redemption.

First, we are taught in both the accounts of Creation that have come down to us through the channel of the Old Testament, as regards the nature of Man, that he is both a part of the order of Nature and a being above that order. He is one with the animal creation in the possession of a bodily frame, of sense and appetite; in a word, he belongs to the category of the "flesh." He is above it in that he is endowed (1) with a special authority over the earth and the orders of life which it contains,[1] which were created with express reference to him as their climax,[2] and which he has the capacity of understanding and "naming";[3] and (2) with a unique nature, separated in kind, and not merely in degree, from the highest earthly creature, so that he "is something new, and not merely a higher stage of the animal world,"[4] being created by God "in His own image," "after His own likeness."[5] "This image is the stamp left by a living spiritual Being upon an inferior sensuous nature. . . . On the basis of impersonal life, Man is to be personal; on the basis of transitory life, spiritual; on the basis of a limited, sensuous life, morally free."[6]

Secondly, we are taught that Man's present condition as a spiritual being is not what it was meant to be by

[1] Gen. i. 26; ii. 19.
[2] Gen. i. 29.
[3] Gen. ii. 19 f. Schultz, "Old Testament Theology": "He is given the right of naming them, and thus of showing himself their master by his knowledge of them" (I. 255, 256).
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 256.
[5] Gen. i. 26.
[6] Schultz, II. 268.

his Maker. He has lost his place in the creation by his own fault, a fault which has become an evil habit and condition, whose baleful influence has passed on from generation to generation, and which has spread laterally from man to man, till there have been times of sore and unspeakable corruption, for which the only remedy is the absolute destruction of those who have surrendered themselves hopelessly to its power. But all men have not equally handed themselves over to the dominion of sin; in all generations there have been a few men who have retained enough of their spiritual nature to be the chosen vessels of the redemptive forces that God has kept in store for the ultimate renewal of humanity, and these have been selected and hallowed for the conveyance of this Divine grace down the generations.

II

So much generally. More particularly, the essential factors in the picture of the first and of subsequent falls into sin are these:—

1. The Divine personality and the human are placed in striking relation and contrast. The human spirit is in conscious relation with the Divine, but it is distinct from it, so that a free alliance and at the same time a deliberate revolt are possible. God desires to be served by Man, but it must be from free will, and not from compulsion. He is therefore put on his trial, so that the possibility of virtue, *i.e.* innocence, may by discipline and effort be transformed into the possession of virtue, *i.e.* moral character.

2. The Divine will expresses itself in direct command or law, acknowledged by the human spirit as such. In the story of Eden this command seems to be of a somewhat arbitrary character, but it is so clearly symbolical

that no stress need be laid on its mere form. It is quite certain that it stands for a typical Divine injunction, which, like an algebraic formula, may be translated into any number of particular cases. Those therefore who pour contempt on the story on the ground that there would be nothing essentially wrong in the mere act of eating an "apple," only show that they have not yet disabused themselves from that spirit of literalism against which in others they are never tired of railing. The essence of the situation lies in the fact that Adam is said to have transgressed what he knew to be a Divine command.

3. The temptation to evil is represented both as a suggestion from without and as an impulse from within. These two factors are essential to a true act of wrongdoing. How far we are to consider the "serpent" as a representation of the Evil Spirit in a crude and material form, we need not now inquire; all that is significant for our purpose is that the objective and the subjective factors of wrongdoing are clearly indicated. There are lowering influences in the environment; there are wayward desires within the organism; and the marriage of these two issues in an act, and then in a condition, of sin. At the same time we must note emphatically that there is no principle of dualism in the Old Testament. There is but one Creator, and He is altogether good, and has made all things good. It is through the maladjustment of things not in themselves evil that evil arises; the choosing, at the wrong time and under wrong conditions, of a course of conduct which thereby becomes wrong.

4. This act of sin is unmistakably presented, not as an accident, nor as a necessary element in the upward progress of the soul, which could not have been avoided but as truly a stumble, a lapse, a fall. No hint is given

us what the development of Man would have been if the Fall had not taken place; the purpose of the Jehovist is entirely practical—contingencies are not in his mind. But he is clear on this point: sin is an intruder in the universe. It has no business here; the one thing of supreme interest is—how to get rid of it. The sole element of apparent gain to Man that has come to him through the Fall is a gain in intellectual standing; henceforth he knows good and evil experimentally, and not merely as ideas; but this, if a gain at all, does not in any way minister to his true blessedness; rather it implies the degradation of the very intellect, by enlisting it with the evil will in a fellowship of wrongdoing, so that in the very act of being developed it is also debauched.[1]

5. The penalties of sin are complex. They involve that sense of heavy labour and disappointment that is inwoven in the lot of man, and makes his work a burden instead of being a pleasure;[2] the subjection of the free human spirit under the tyranny of natural law—*i.e.* his enslavement to his environment, from which his emancipation has been so slow and painful; the entrance of suffering and pain into his life, a penalty of which woman has

[1] "The being is enlarged by the mental experience of evil, but it loses far more than it gains. It loses cheerful communion with the Divine; it loses the sense of self-approval; it is driven forth from Paradise. Adam and Eve have grown at once to the consciousness of manhood and womanhood—they are no longer as children in a garden—but they are at the same time ashamed of one another, and afraid of God. In short they are fallen; they have lost a sure position—they have gained an uncertain future. The idea of a fall, of a distinct moral loss not to be recovered, is carefully and completely preserved, and whatever later theory may have made of a balance even of moral good in the origin of evil, there is nothing to encourage such a theory in the early picture. From the moral side—and this is the essential side—the picture is dark throughout" (Principal Tulloch, "The Christian Doctrine of Sin," pp. 75, 76).

[2] See Barry's "Manifold Witness to Christ," p. 50.

had to bear so heavy a share ;[1] decay and "death," due to the withdrawal of the sustenance of the "tree of life";[2] and the loss of close and friendly communion with God, linked with that sense of shame and guilt which is one of the moral *differentiae* of the human race.[3] In some sense or other all these consequences are associated in the mind of the Jehovist with the first Fall of Man into sin, consequences which are afterwards passed on by the mysterious law of heredity into the universal lot of mankind, and give their meaning to Paul's saying, "As in Adam all die."[4]

III

THE later development of the doctrine of sin in the Old Testament is but a deepening and enrichment of the ideas seen in germ in the first acts of recorded sin. The Hebrew language is peculiarly copious in the vocabulary of sin—a sure sign that the Hebrew mind was exceptionally sensitive in this direction. The following are the keywords which give the determining idea to the thought.

1. The most universal term for sin in the Old Testament is *chatath*, derived like its New Testament equivalent—*hamartano*—from a word signifying to *miss the mark*. It implies *failure* to reach a point aimed at, a coming short of an ideal end of conduct. We are made for obedience, and to become disobedient is to

[1] Gen. iii. 16.

[2] Gen. iii. 2. The precise meaning which we are to attach to this word "death" is one of the most vexed questions of interpretation, and will be dealt with at large later on. See, however, on this point Principal Tulloch in "The Christian Doctrine of Sin," p. 77, where he advocates the view that it is not taught that death as a physical fact is here meant, but that its *character* is changed.

[3] Gen. iii. 23.

[4] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

fail not merely in the sense in which a blighted plant fails to reach its perfection, which it cannot help, but in the sense of refusing to co-operate in the process of growth. It therefore always conveys a suggestion, more or less severe, of moral blame; it means that we have failed where we might have succeeded.

2. The word that next denotes the characteristic feature of sin is *avon*, which literally means that which is crooked as opposed to what is straight—exactly like our *right* and *wrong*. This word is radically identical in connotation with the preceding. "As there is a right mark or point to be aimed at, so there is always a right line to it. And *sin* is not only failure as missing a mark, but perversity as taking a wrong line." There the Divine will is conceived as *ideal*, here as *directive*; any deviation of our course from the straight line is therefore equivalent to a failure to reach the goal, for that goal can be reached only in one way.[1]

3. Another common word is *aven*, which primarily means *vanity* and *nothingness*. Evil as opposed to good is its privation[2] or negation, emptiness as opposed to fulness, loss as opposed to gain.

4. Still more definite is the frequently used word *pesha*, translated variously *transgression*, *trespass*, or *rebellion*. Behind this lies the idea of a Divine ordinance or law, and of an intentional breach of the same. The advance of connotation here is suggested clearly in the passage in Job where it is stated, "he addeth rebellion (*pesha*) unto his sin (*chattatho*)."[3]

5. Generalised expressions such as *ra*, "denoting evil in all senses, physical, ethical, and accidental,"[4] and

[1] For illustrations of the use of this word, see Gen. iv. 13, xliv. 16, and in Psalms xxxii. and li.
[2] Cf. Amos v. 5, and Isaiah xli. 29.
[3] Job xxxiv. 37.
[4] Cf. Lev. xxiii. 10; Gen. viii. 21; and Isaiah iii. 11.

resha, wickedness, in the primary sense of tumultuous lawless conduct, and derivatively "the disposition of evil, evil become a habit," occur frequently.

6. One more word is needful to complete this abbreviated list of Hebrew terms for sin. It is *asham*, to be discriminated from *chatath* in a sacrificial sense; the latter meaning *sin-offering* in a more general application, the former *trespass-offering* for definite acts of wrongdoing and breaches of well-known prohibitions of the law.[1]

Gathering up the composite meanings distributed among these special terms, we find them all full of *moral* significance. They can in their Old Testament uses only be properly used of creatures with a spiritual nature, and capable of choosing between two courses of conduct. Knowledge of the right is implied, and the power to do it; so that wrong courses are the result of depraved desires, of a will that is out of harmony with the right and true, the spiritual and the Divine. Only one qualification need be made to this statement of the case, and even this tends to give a deeper meaning to the idea of right and wrong in the Hebrew mind. A definite place is made in the list of possible trespasses for those that arise from ignorance and inadvertence. These are not considered to be so heinous in their guilt as wilful transgressions of the law. But the law is conceived as something so sacred and inviolable in its objective character, that even these sins of ignorance must be in some way expiated, and an elaborate code of penance is laid down for such offences in Lev. iv. for individuals, for priests, for the nation, and for its rulers. The immediate effect of this regulation was to give a higher sanctity to the law, and to remove the temptation of remaining wilfully ignorant of its

[1] Num. v. 6, 7; Lev. vi. 2-7.

commands, which might otherwise have become a serious danger to the community. The Mosaic legislation here held the mirror up to Nature, whose laws follow their undeviating course irrespective of our knowledge of them, and visit the ignorant with like punishment with the wilful—an apparent injustice in the case of the individual who has had no opportunity to make himself acquainted with them, but, for the race, one of the most powerful incentives to persevering inquiry into the character and range of those laws.

This idea of the essential nature of wrongdoing, as the violation of Divine law, was vastly enriched and sensitised by the "Mosaic" code of ritual and worship. From an absolute point of view, it had the radical defect, in common with every ritualistic system, of creating artificial sins, of investing neutral acts with all the sanctity of moral excellences, and of drawing the sense of wrongdoing to the surface, from the disposition and the motive to the outward act. But as an educative system it was the finest instrument the world has ever seen for raising the sense of propriety and social right to the level of spiritual principles. It sensitised the moral sense till it was capable of receiving the impress of a still higher revelation. "The law came in that the trespass might abound,"[1] says Paul, meaning that its purpose was partly at any rate to increase the consciousness of sin; "so that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ."[2] This was its ideal end. In point of fact, the lower side of its influence was developed even more than its higher; so that in the issue that which was meant to be a temporary bridge from the "natural" to the "spiritual," actually became a barrier to the influx of a greater good than itself, and Judaism, the degenerate type of Mosaism, sank into

[1] Rom. v. 20. [2] Gal. iii. 24.

the worst hindrance which the Saviour had to meet in His earthly work, and was at last the proximate cause of His rejection and crucifixion.

We see in the Psalms and the Prophets a state of religious evolution which was intermediate between these two points. Then for the first time in history the dawning sense of the perfect spiritual life came into conflict with the outward ceremonial ideal of the Mosaic law. These prophets were passionate in their denunciation of mere outward obedience, when the heart was impure and false. In contradistinction with that kind of religious performance, they preached the moral ideal pure and simple, spoke of God as the embodiment of holiness and righteousness and mercy, and announced fearlessly that He demanded a service of which the essential elements were not the offering of bulls and rams, but devout, noble, and immaculate lives. Sin thus became a transgression against the principles of right living, rather than a violation of ceremonial law; registering another step in the evolution of the moral sense. The prophets also brought out in clearer light than before the organic nature of sin, its persistence in the nation as well as in families and individuals. Its presence is felt to pervade the world, to be as diffused as the universal air which all men breathe—a moral miasma poisoning life in its inward parts. From the individual it has spread into the race, and wherever it has spread it has carried a sure degeneration and a certain punishment, which on one side is the infliction of Jehovah's will, and on the other the inevitable result of the evil itself. Neither the one nor the many can hope to escape this judgment on sin; the *nations* that forget God will as surely go down into the pit as the *men* that forget Him; for not even is the law of gravitation more universal or constant than this

dragging weight of evil. The sombre influence of this thought so deeply colours the prophetic mind, that there is little room for the brighter side of the picture; the beauty and the reward of the ideal life only rarely flash out, like a fair landscape seen on the background of a retreating storm.[1] But over all these are visions of the blue sky of Divine mercy and pity for wayward humanity. Here and there through the earthquake and the storm is heard the still small voice, which invites to repentance and promises pardon to those who will leave their sin. The terrible nature of wrongdoing is nowhere so forcibly shown as in the prophets; at the same time it would be difficult even in the Gospels to find more attractive and convincing glimpses of the way of recovery—a way never barred on the Divine side, however slow Man may be to enter on its privileges.

IV

When we step across the threshold of the Gospels, however, we find ourselves in a different atmosphere. The clouds are still in the heavens, but they have retreated to the horizon, and hang there in dense masses; our minds are almost always in the sunshine as we read the discourses of our Lord, and watch Him at His saving work. For we are here in view, not of Man's sin, so much as of God's righteousness. The perfect Life fills the foreground with its beauty and fragrance; we behold "His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."[2] We see sin in the light of its opposite, and though that sight

[1] Isaiah xi. 1-9, and lxv. 13-25, are typical examples of the idyllic element in prophecy.

[2] John i. 14.

sheds a more awful radiance on its heinousness, and shame, and ingratitude than the sternest denunciations of the Old Testament, the effect of the picture is to manifest the holiness and love of God in Christ, and the possibilities of our nature as realised in His life and character, rather than the depth of human depravity.

But there is no contradiction between the Old Testament teaching concerning the nature of sin and that of the New. The harmony comes forth all the more emphatically when we realise what the perfect life is like, and what are its dominating motives and principles of conduct. If sin is seen in the Old Testament to be a state of rebellion, of transgression, of self-will, the true life of holiness is seen in the Gospels to be a state of perfect obedience, submission, and active harmony with the fatherly will of God. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God,"[1] is the central pivot round which the Son's whole life circled; it is the key which unlocks all its mysteries.

1. But there is advance as well as harmony in the teaching. Jesus completes the conception of sin towards which the Hebrew conscience had been slowly working its way, by showing that it consisted not in mere outward acts, nor even in isolated motives, but in something that lies at the roots of the personal life. It is a condition and a tendency. "Man not only sins, but is a sinner naturally." It is a disease infecting the springs of moral life, pervading the heart, and contaminating the very thoughts. Nothing good can come out of a bad man. "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit";[2] "The tree is known by its fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh";[3] "That which

[1] Heb. x. 7, 9. [2] Matt. vii. 17. [3] Matt. xii. 33, 34.

is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"[1] (where we find the first distinct reference to that division of our nature which is so elaborately worked out by St. Paul); "But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man."[2] These passages illustrate, both in the principle underlying them and in their vivid summary of particular sins, our Lord's conception of wrongdoing as a corrupt self-will, branching out in all directions into loathsome acts each with the same characteristic element at its root.

2. The superhuman aspects of evil and good alike are also greatly emphasised and enriched in our Lord's teaching. There is a great Over-world divided into sharp and hopeless antagonism, a Kingdom of God and a kingdom of the Evil One; and these are in conflict for the possession of Man's soul. We must be careful, however, once more, not to allow ourselves to imagine that there is here the slightest tendency to teach that system of dualism which was the canker at the root of the philosophic thinking of that time. The Devil and his angels are still on sufferance, and while their influence on the human spirit is great, extending down into his physical condition,[3] and causing all manner of painful diseases, the range of their power is strictly limited,[4] they are consistently represented as under the control of Jesus,[5] and their tenure of influence is in God's good time to come to an end.[6] It is impossible to believe that in dealing with these superhuman agencies

[1] John iii. 6.
[2] Matt. xv. 18, 19.
[3] Matt. ix. 32, etc.
[4] Luke viii. 32.
[5] Matt. viii. 33, 34.
[6] Luke x. 18.

as existent, Jesus is only making a concession to the superstitions of the time, as some commentators, who find it difficult to believe in the existence of evil spirits, would make out. His attitude towards the whole question is too serious for such a hypothesis; our only choice is either to say that He is mistaken, or to accept His teaching as determining the real existence of daemonic beings. Its bearing on our present purpose is found in the deepening sense which it gives us of the way in which evil is intertwined with the spiritual as well as the physical facts of human life, and of the vast forces needful for its expulsion from the Universe.

3. Another advance in the teaching of Jesus concerning the nature of sin is the way in which our duty to God and to our fellow-men is shown to be essentially inter-related. Obedience to our Heavenly Father is to be proved by our performance of what is right and kind and loving to those around us. Not by acts of outward worship is He pleased, but by right affections, by noble conduct, by gentle ministries to one another.[1] Love to God, and love to man—this is the "fulfilling of the Law," this is "the Law and the Prophets." Sin is ingratitude against God, and hatred against our brother. Self-will against Him who made us is the same thing as that which shows itself in selfishness in our earthly relations.

4. Again, Jesus introduced into the conception of right and wrong a fine discrimination, a sense of more or less, which has never had its true place in Christian thought. The notion that all sins are equally heinous, that there is no difference between venial and mortal offences, is altogether foreign to His teaching. The Gospels are full of illumination on this point. We are taught to see things in their proportion and perspective, to distinguish

[1] Matt. v. 21-26, 38-42.

between sins that are rather symptomatic of misdirected passions or of an imperfect development of the moral sense than of hopeless corruption on the one side, and those on the other that arise from a wilful rejection of the essential principles of right conduct and holy feelings. Space forbids us to enter into this matter with any detail, but we may say in a word that the test which is everywhere applied is this: *that* sin is mortal which is a final barrier to the entrance of the grace of God, and *that* sin is venial, or least mortal, which by the influx of a truer light or tenderer treatment makes way for the Divine influence. This is why Jesus was so kind and pitiful to the publicans (the victims in many cases of a corrupt occupation) and to the impure (the victims of misdirected passions driven into extremes by bitter social ostracism), and why He was so uncompromising against the Pharisees, who had all possible spiritual light and yet rejected His message. His worst judgment against these Pharisees was uttered in the quiet word, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you."[1] It is of the utmost importance that this aspect of our Lord's teaching should have its right place in our system of morals and in our attitude towards the erring and the lost. Especially should it be made clear that those who are ostensibly religious are still in danger of sins that are beyond measure dangerous in their subtlety and power.

5. But the final and most important of all the aspects of sin that are emphasised in the Gospels lies, not in the direct teaching, but in the sacrifice of our Lord. Only against that supreme act in which He delivered Himself up for our offences, and became the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, is it possible for us to measure the terrible hold sin had gained on the soul

[1] Matt. xxi. 31

of man, and the tremendous effort needed to uproot it from the world. How true this is may be seen in the fact that when we lose faith in the reality and necessity of the atonement, we inevitably tend to shallower views of sin, and the passion of our antagonism against evil begins to wane. But to believe in very truth that it was needful for God to stoop, in the person of His Son, so low that He went under the yoke of death on our behalf, in order that the terrible bondage of sin might be broken, must make sin itself inexpressibly loathsome to every true believer. Beyond this even Divine love could not go. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross at once measures the otherwise fathomless depths of sin, and the matchless and omnipotent range of the Love that would redeem at such cost a race that has been so slow to be redeemed.

V

FINALLY, in the Epistles, we find another, and in some directions still more developed, treatment of the question of sin. This is to be found most vividly in the writings of St. Paul, and it will be sufficient for our purpose if we limit our remarks to his theory. Paul was a psychologist and a philosopher, and all his references to the great realities of the spiritual life are controlled by this fact, as well as by the consideration that he had received a subtle and careful training in the Rabbinical schools of his day. Without entering into some of those things in his letters which are "hard to be understood," we find that the salient points of his teaching on the question of sin are clear and unmistakable.

1. In the background of all his thoughts there stands the conception of the great moral order of the universe,

mirrored and emphasised in the Mosaic Law to the Jew,[1] and lying implicit, but accessible, to the Gentile, in the revelations of Nature and the voice of conscience.[2] To this moral order all men are responsible. But Jews and Gentiles alike have failed to fulfil this responsibility. The source of sin in the Gentile is the obscuration of the idea of God through the effects of idolatry and sensuality.[3] Its source in the Jew is other than this, but though favoured with fuller light, he has fallen under the same evil tyranny as the Gentile, and he is therefore all the more guilty, since more was to be expected of him.[4] Thus all men have alike failed to fulfil the demands of the moral law, and are "under sin."[5]

2. So far Paul puts the case in terms of Rabbinical thought. But his distinctive contribution to the science of sin is when he speaks in the language of the psychologist. Man according to him is a complex being—a fact that seems to have been burned into the mind of the apostle by the stress of his own fierce inward experiences. Two natures fight hard for the mastery in Man. There is the carnal or lower nature, the "flesh," and the higher or "noumenal," which is the seat of the "spirit."[6] The lower nature is the seat of sin; it is altogether corrupt: "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."[7] The higher nature is the seat of all holy impulses, of all Divine activity. Between these conflicting elements there is no truce: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other."[8] The sad spiritual unrest which is so marked a feature

[1] Rom. iii. 2.
[2] *Ibid.*, i. 32.
[3] *Ibid.*, i. 21-24.
[4] *Ibid.*, ii. 17-24.
[5] *Ibid.*, iii. 23; Gal. iii. 22.
[6] *Ibid.*, vii. 5, 6.
[7] *Ibid.*, vii. 18.
[8] Gal. v. 17.

of the inward life arises from the perpetual and irreconcilable warfare between these two principles. It explains the contrast between ideal and accomplishment [1] in the best men; the failure of all to live a true life in their own strength; the need of help from above, ere the victory can be gained by any one.[2] According as the lower or the higher nature prevails, a man is in a saved or lost condition. There are some in whom the flesh is so paramount that they are "dead in sin." [3] But even here there is responsibility: for conscience is not absolutely *dead*; it is really sleeping, and may yet be awakened by Divine influence.[4] Those who have thus been quickened by the Holy Spirit are "new creatures," and "the old things are become new to them," [5] and they have entered on a fresh career of hope and progress, which has perfection for its goal and heaven for its horizon. Such men are no longer under the "law of sin and of death"; [6] they can do "all things through Christ that strengtheneth them," [7] who "lives" in them, [8] who has redeemed them from "the curse of the law," [9] and has made their experience one of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." [10]

3. Behind the psychologist in Paul stands the philosopher. He is not satisfied with dealing with the facts of human experience; he has a theory with which to account for them. Two great doctrines round which endless controversy has been waged from the first age of Christianity to the present stand out in his explanation of the mystery of iniquity. The first is the universality of sin in the race; and the second its hereditary or "original" character in the individual. Our purpose

[1] Rom. vii. 19.
[2] *Ibid.*, vii. 24, 25.
[3] Eph. ii. 1, 5.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] 2 Cor. v. 17.
[6] Rom. viii. 2.
[7] Phil. iv. 13.
[8] Gal. ii. 20.
[9] *Ibid.*, iii. 13.
[10] Rom. xiv. 17.

is not to enter into the controversial aspects of these difficult questions, but simply and briefly to expound their salient points.

Sin, according to the great Apostle of the Gentiles, is a universal fact. The whole race, and every individual in the race, is tainted with it. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."[1] By this the Apostle means that each individual, on his own account, has done what is wrong, and what he knows to be wrong, so that the whole race in its totality stands condemned, and is under the judgment which everywhere follows on the commission of evil.

But there is more than this to be said. Not only do all men individually, and so collectively, do wrong, but there is an original evil bias, or tendency, which has been transmitted from the first ancestor of the race down the ages, in which we all share. This bias, being a bias towards sin, carries with it in a mysterious but real sense an element of condemnation. The springs of spiritual vitality in the race have been poisoned at the fountain-head, and in virtue of the solidarity of the generations, and of that law by which we share in the organic disabilities of our progenitors, we suffer loss, and are tainted with sin and with the consequences, penal and other, entailed by sin. There has been no time in the history of Christian thought when this mysterious New Testament doctrine may be rationally grasped so easily as in the light of the scientific doctrine of heredity of to-day, which has cast its sombre shadow over such wide reaches of human thought, and has deepened so sadly every problem of social regeneration. What in earlier times had to be taken on faith, and believed on the authority of Sacred Writ, now meets us as an induction from the pages of every textbook

[1] Rom. iii. 23 : cf. verses 9-18.

of biology, and as a corner-stone in every philosophical theory. The generations are linked, each to each, in the bonds of a relationship so close and intimate, that the idea of a racial responsibility is but a necessary deduction from the facts; and the many passages in which God is represented as dealing with humankind not so much as a collection of separate individuals, but as a kind of organic unity, are in entire keeping with the whole scientific outlook, and especially is this so of the latest generalisations of human thought on the moral condition of Man.

VI

To sum up this brief survey of the Biblical doctrine of Sin, in view of our special purpose.

Right through the Bible there is a consistent and progressive theory of human sin and depravity. It dominates each writer according to his historical place and perspective, and pervades all the various classes of literature of which the Bible is composed. In other words, it is an organic and formative idea, slowly realised, constantly enriched by new illustrative material from the thought and the life of the Hebrews, and finally rounded into completeness in the revelation of Jesus Christ and His apostles.

The implication behind this idea is that Man stands in a unique relation with God—*i.e.* that he is a spiritual being. As such he had an ideal destiny, which has been from the outset interfered with, and, so far as he is concerned, defeated, because he has failed to maintain his Divine sonship. The moral poison has permeated his whole nature, affecting his mind, his will, his affections; it has entailed all kinds of disabilities and penal consequences in the individual and the race. His

vision of God is clouded ; his relations with his fellow-creatures have been degraded from love into hatred, from trustful co-operation into suspicion and bitter alienation ; his history in the race, from being one of steady progress and gradual triumph over the natural obstacles with which in any case he would have had to struggle, has been one of fitful effort after a better life, ending ever in defeat and retrogression, discouragement and shame, and in the individual, in a constant warfare between the lower and the higher nature, in which the lower has been mainly triumphant, till his soul is darkened with a sense of continual failure. Side by side with this exposition of Man's ruin, there is developed in the Bible a redemptive idea, which is also slowly and painfully developed, waxing and waning in successive generations, but on the whole steadily opening out into clearness and beauty. The fundamental conception of the Bible is that what Man could not do, and what the educative and disciplinary forces of life could not do, God is willing to do and has done by the unfolding of His love and grace. By Man's willingness on his side to be helped and redeemed, he is enabled to defeat the work and ravages of sin, and to transform, through the Incarnation, what seemed doomed to hopeless failure into a new and higher development of spiritual life, both for the individual and the race.

"This I know—and this may by all men be known—that no good or lovely thing exists in this world without its correspondent darkness; and that the universe presents itself continually to mankind under the stern aspect of warning, or of choice, the good and the evil set on the right hand and the left."
JOHN RUSKIN.

Chapter IV.—Anthropology and the Fall

Conscience and the Fall—The Adam of Scripture and of "Paradise Lost"—The Evolutionary Theory and Moral Evil—Degeneration in the Organic World—Man physically deteriorating—Intellectual *v.* Moral Progress—Primitive and Savage Man—Witness of History.

I

WE have now to inquire into the problem whether the Biblical theory of the Fall of Man, and of the nature of sin, can be squared with the current ideas of his primitive nature and condition, and with other broad generalisations of Anthropological Science.

Beginning with the testimony of our moral and spiritual consciousness, there is no doubt that the doctrine of a Fall from a state of innocence is fully consistent with the subjective facts of human life. The appeal of the Biblical story calls forth an involuntary response from the conscience. The best men equally with the worst—perhaps the best more emphatically than the worst, because their moral consciousness is more normal and developed—confess to a sense of dislocation in their inward life. They feel that there is something wrong with them. When they endeavour to interpret this universal testimony of conscience, they are not satisfied with calling to mind separate acts of trans-

gression, or even acquired habits of evil. The trouble lies deeper than anything to which they can point in their individual experience, in those "abysmal depths of personality" from which all the acts and facts of life take their rise. There is, in other words, a predisposition towards evil in all hearts and lives, dating from the time when they were neither responsible for what they did, nor fully understood the character of their impulses. In the case of individual men and women, it is impossible to say that all the evil in their lives is the outcome of their unbiassed will. It runs back into the hereditary element in their nature. And yet there is an unequivocal voice in our moral consciousness which tells us that both the patent acts of wrongdoing of which we are guilty, and the latent predisposition from which these partly at least emerge, are abnormal facts in our nature. *They ought not to be.* They are stamped from the outset to the issue with being *unnatural* in the highest sense. Now, if sin were but an inevitable circumstance in the career of a normally developing being, if it were nothing more than the "throwing off of the brute inheritance," such a testimony on the part of conscience would be incomprehensible. The only non-biblical explanation that has even an aspect of plausibility about it, that this attitude of the conscience is but the natural fruit of Christian training, will not hold water for a moment. As a matter of fact, when the doctrine of the fallen condition of our race is brought home to the awakened non-Christian conscience, it is found to interpret its own vague and undeveloped sense of wrongdoing as nothing else seems to do. The quickened moral sense responds to it like a rusty lock to its long-lost key. And thus, where the consciousness of sin has not been altogether lost, the story of the Fall becomes the more

credible because it has this interpretative power over the inner life. Whether true as history in its literal sense, it is undeniably true in the illumination which it throws on the subjective mystery of evil. All that conscience tells us about ourselves is at least consistent with the theory that we are a fallen race.

II

So far, we are not out of touch with the old belief. Our subjective consciousness substantially tallies with the "allegory" of the Fall. But when we bring that ancient postulate to the bar of the new Anthropology, we are met by what look like insuperable objections.

It is, for instance, confidently affirmed that the early chapters of Genesis present us with a conception of the first man which in the light of present science is incredible, impossible, and monstrously out of keeping with what must have been the facts of the case.

To weigh the value of this assertion we must glance at the conception of Adam as limned in such graphic and simple lines in these chapters.

In passing, we must bear in mind that the "concept" which most of us have of Adam is based not so much on Genesis as on Milton's "Paradise Lost." Grand and impressive as the personality of the first man is in that great epic, and justifiable as it may be on the ground of poetic license, it is an entirely false reproduction of the Adam of Scripture. It is a distorted conception of "what is virtually a full-grown manhood masquerading under the conditions of childhood." In "Paradise Lost" Adam is a philosopher and a courtier, with the ideas of the sixteenth century and the manners of a diplomat. He is self-conscious, imaginative, and punctilious; in fact he is the mediaeval

Man transferred to the canvas of prehistoric time; that is to say, he is a monstrosity. But Adam in the Garden of Eden is a very different being. As Bp. Barry says: "In the Scriptural vision of primeval humanity, we trace indeed all the germs of civilisation to come;—in simple work, the germ of material civilisation,—in the origin of language, of the intellectual,—in marriage, of the social and moral,—in the hearing of the voice of the Lord, of the religious. But it is in germ only; in a simplicity not brutish indeed or savage, as we now see degraded savagery, but childlike, 'naked and not ashamed'; clearly the beginning of a development in all the elements of human nature—which the entrance of evil into the world disturbed and perverted by a morbid development of itself, but destroyed not—up to the perfection of manhood in the dispensation on earth, and the earnest of a higher perfection still in the world to come."[1] In the Bible story Adam is a simple child, with everything to learn; untried, fallible, and easily temptable because of the very innocence which is his most attractive quality.

Now is there anything hopelessly discordant between this and the account given of Man in the textbooks of Anthropological Science?

Evolution posits it as a fundamental principle that Man has been slowly raised—so slowly indeed that it is impossible to trace the steps—from the grade of the lower animals into that of a self-conscious creature. We shall never know the moment when, as we have already said, "the manlike ape became the apelike

[1] Clement Alexandrinus ("Strom.," vi. 12. 98) in answer to question whether Adam was formed perfect or imperfect replies: "They shall learn from us that he was not perfect [*i.e.* complete in development, τέλειος] in respect of his creation, but in a fit condition to receive virtue." Cf. Irenaeus, "C. Haer.," iv. 38. (See "Lux Mundi," Appendix II., 5th Ed., p. 535, footnote.)

man"; for the reason that the change, being mental and moral, has left no trace either in geological remains or in any more legible record. But at some moment or other Science affirms that the great change did unquestionably take place. Awaking from a state of animality, Man at last stood upright, possessed of dawning self-consciousness and a germinal moral sense. The change was none the less real because we cannot mark its exact date; and having taken place, the essence of it was that Man, henceforth, since he was capable of entering into moral distinctions, was capable of sin. Before this he was capable of breaking the laws of God without sinning: "without law" (*i.e.* the "knowledge of law") "there is no transgression"; but "when the commandment came, sin revived."[1] All this is simply what the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" means in the Book of Genesis. When for the first time Man stood face to face with definite conscious temptation to do that which he knew to be wrong, he held in his hand the fruit of that tree, and his destiny as a moral being was trembling in the balance. And when for the first time he succumbed to temptation, and faint dawnings of remorse visited his heart, at that moment he was banished from the Eden of innocence in which his nature had hitherto dwelt, and he was driven forth from the presence of the Lord. His consciousness of the Divine, as suggested in Genesis, is a dramatic statement of a fact that must have been almost inconceivably faint and imperfect; but in all essentials there is no difference between the fact and its exposition there. Till this point in his career, a fair and happy development of moral nature had opened before Man, to which the development of his physical frame in bygone aeons was as nothing, beauti-

[1] Rom. vii. 9.

ful as that had been. But with the first sin another line of development was started,—no longer upward but downward; no longer in the direction of his latent possibilities for good, but in the line of his capacity for evil. The hidden rift between what he might be and what he was appeared; he parted with his ideal life, and henceforth the return to the garden of innocence out of which he had been driven was guarded by fiery cherubim of remorse. We may put it in evolutionary or in theological language as we please; we may say that "*Man is fallen,*" or that he is the victim of "arrested development," of "retrogressive moral forces"; the fact is the same.[1]

III

A FAR more serious charge against the Evolutionist is that his theory of the origin and nature of Man empties the idea of moral evil of its distinctive contents, and so tends to discountenance the Biblical doctrine of sin as expounded in the previous chapter.

What then has the consistent Evolutionist to say about this question?

It is needful to be careful here in the use of terms. There are few words in the English language more ambiguously used than this word *evil.*

[1] As regards the question whether there was a single First Man or not, various views have been held by Anthropologists, and their arguments are almost equally divided in point of cogency. Wallace has the following remarks on this very difficult subject: "If we are of opinion that he was not really Man till the higher faculties were fully developed, we may fairly assert that there were many originally distinct races of men; while, if we think that a being closely resembling us in form and structure, but with mental faculties scarcely raised above the brute, must still be considered to have been human, we are fully entitled to maintain the common origin of all Mankind" ("Natural Selection," p. 322).

1. First, it is made to do duty for the idea of *physical suffering*, and not unfrequently it is used in this sense with much of the suggestion of obloquy which logically belongs only to other meanings of the term. In a recently published book on "Evil and Evolution," the whole argument of the author is vitiated by this confusion of terminology. No adequate distinction is made between *pain* as a fact of organic life and *wrong-doing*. "Suffering itself is evil, and nothing but evil."[1] The only distinction in the words according to this writer is that involved in a lower and higher maladjustment to environment. This idea of the essential "evil" of pain is a relic of that hedonistic philosophy of morals which has vitiated so much recent thought on the subject, by confusing vital issues. Until we get rid of this fallacy it will be impossible to regain a true faith in the essential goodness of God, and in His moral government. The only way to retain respect for the Divine Being on such a hypothesis is to hold, as does this writer, that the presence of suffering in the Universe implies interference on the part of some malignant Being of vast resources, who has insinuated himself not only into the Providential order, but even into the creative process, so that organic life as well as history are but a record of the conflict between these almost equal Powers. "Tigers and hyenas, vultures and sharks, ferrets and polecats, wasps and spiders, puff-adders and skunks," and such creatures are not the result of the creative activity of a perfectly beneficent and omnipotent God, but the work of a Devil,[2] who has maliciously intruded his malignity into the otherwise

[1] "Evil and Evolution," by the author of "The Social Horizon," p. 56.

[2] See *ibid.*, p. 144, and many other passages where this idea is plainly suggested.

perfect order and harmony of the world. That there is such a Being, who has interfered in the moral evolution of Man, has been the almost universal belief of Christians in all generations, but the Christian doctrine restricts his activity within the moral sphere, and gives him no place in the creation of organic life. To elevate him so highly that he shares in God's creative attributes, is to be guilty of a modernised form of Zoroastrianism, which finds no hint of support from Scripture, though this writer seems to imagine that he is building on a Christian basis. The fallacy lies in the suppressed premise in the argument—that physical pain and moral evil are identical in kind, and that they must spring from a common root of malevolence. Mysterious and trying to faith as many of the aspects of physical suffering often are, there is nothing gained by complicating the problem in this manner, and there is more lost than this writer seems to think. Thousands of devout souls who now bear their trials in patience in the belief that there is some hidden beneficent purpose in all their sufferings, would utterly break down beneath the burden if once they lost this refuge of faith. No; pain and suffering are too much inwoven with the very tissue and end of life not to be a "part of the plan"; and that this is so ought to make us revise, not the belief that God is all-good, but the other belief, that pain is all evil.

2. Secondly, the word *evil*, more appropriately, is used in the sense of *moral wrongdoing*. Here it can only be applied to the dispositions and acts of an ethical being, *i.e.* to one endowed with freedom of will. It presupposes not only the potential existence of this faculty, but a conscious realisation of it. There is implied in every moral act a knowledge of alternatives, and a sense of their ethical quality not merely as

stronger and weaker, but as higher and lower. This bars out all such "wrongdoing" as arises from ignorance, or from such utter weakness of resolve that the worst alternative is forced on us by a stress which makes resistance impossible. Only when we are free to choose can a foolish or disastrous act be morally wrong. This is the beginning of evil in the strict sense. In all other cases we can bear to think of the individual being sacrificed for the good of the race. That implies a sacrifice in the *course*, in order to reach the *goal*; but of the evil that spells moral debasement, we can only say that it is *a missing of the goal itself*.[1]

It is clear that a true conception of this form of evil depends on an adequate theory of the human will. A necessitarian philosophy destroys the very basis of responsibility, and empties moral wrongdoing of its distinctive contents; for if we are at the mercy of the dominant motive, or rather if we have no share in determining which motive shall become dominant, then we are equally incapable of virtue and vice, guilt is a mere juridical term, and punishment a mere utilitarian device.[2] But we must not identify Evolution with any such philosophy. The Evolutionist is bound to find room for all the facts of life, and if moral freedom be a sublime reality, as we believe it is, we are not

[1] Le Conte, "Evolution and Religious Thought," p. 370.

[2] Coleridge in "Aids to Reflection" puts the matter thus: "A moral evil is an evil which has its origin in the will. An evil common to all must have a ground common to all. But the actual existence of moral evil we are bound to admit; and that there is an evil common to all is a fact, and this evil therefore must have a common ground. Now this evil ground cannot originate in the Divine will, it must therefore be referred to the will of man; and this evil ground we call original sin. It is a mystery, that is, a fact which we see but cannot explain, and the doctrine a truth which we apprehend, but can neither comprehend nor communicate. And such by the quality of the subject (namely, a responsible will) it must be, if it be true at all" (Comment CIXc. 20).

precluded by this theory from a thorough belief in freedom, implying as it does the possibility of moral lapse. Not the certainty of course, but only the possibility. It is conceivable that the race, when the alternatives of moral choice were first realised by it in the dim past, might have chosen the upward path with undivided will, as we believe it was chosen by one Individual of the race, Jesus Christ. But once the door was open for transgression, the possibility arose which has since become a dreadful fact—that the whole race should give way to temptation, and (in varying degrees) choose evil for its portion. In no other way than by providing for this dread possibility, that is, by the creation of beings possessed of the essentials of moral freedom, could Innocence become Virtue. "Innocence," it has been well said, "is a pre-established, virtue a self-established, harmony of spiritual activities. The course of human development, whether individual or racial, is from innocence, through more or less discord and conflict, into virtue. And virtue completed, regarded as a condition, is holiness; as an activity, is spiritual freedom. Not happiness nor innocence is the goal of humanity. Happiness will surely come in its train, but if we seek happiness primarily, we miss both. Two things must be steadily borne in mind: virtue is the goal of humanity; virtue cannot be given; it must be self-acquired."[1] Now if, with innocence as a possession, and virtue as a possibility, evil is voluntarily chosen, then, instead of a moral evolution into virtue, there is a *fall* into guilt. From the standpoint of Evolutionary Ethics, therefore, there is nothing irrational or even improbable in the notion of a Fall. The improbability would be that, considering the tremendous drag of the lower nature and the initial weakness of a new instinct,

[1] Le Conte, "Evolution and Religious Thought," p. 72.

a creature just starting on a moral evolution should *not* fall into wrongdoing.

3. But we have not yet exhausted the full meaning of the word *evil*. So far, we have only dealt with *moral evil*, which simply presupposes an ethical personality, living in social relations. There are many of the foremost thinkers of the present day whose philosophy of evil ends here. All Agnostic Evolutionists take for granted, as their postulates oblige them to do, that what they call "sin" is purely a social fact, and consists in the violation of "social relations," having no meaning except within the range of these relations. In thus using the word "sin" they are stealing a term from the realm of theology, and using it in a sense that is inapplicable in any other. For sin implies that man is something more than a moral being, and that he has higher relationships than those that bind him to his fellow-men. He is a child of the Eternal, and is a citizen of a supersensuous realm; as such, he is subject to a higher law of conduct, and is the heir of a nobler ideal of character, than is involved in the fullest harmony with his earthly ethical environment. When he is faithful to these, he is good in the highest possible sense, and attains his true end of Divine Sonship; when he fails to do so, he is guilty of a more heinous wrongdoing than when he violates his human relations *qua* human only. Here for the first time do we come to the true meaning of the word "sin." Just as "evil" in its restricted and technical connotation is a philosophical term, and "vice" is an ethical term, and "crime" is a legal term, so is "sin" distinctively a religious term, implying the personality of God, His Fatherly relations to Man, and all the deep responsibilities of this august relationship. It is a term at once individual and collective; and it issues in an individual and collective realisation of guilt.

"It involves, like evil, the notions of suffering and loss; like vice, the notions of disobedience and blame; like crime, the notions of revolt and wrong, culpability and penalty; but it enlarges almost to infinity all these ideas and elements, and combines them into a unity representative of Man's personal and collective being under a Divine Sovereignty he has denied or forgotten."[1]

This is the essence of the act and condition of sin. There is nothing in evolutionary science which necessitates any modification or attenuation of its meaning, except when that theory is made synonymous with a materialistic scheme of the universe and a necessitarian scheme of morals. Since neither alternative is forced upon us, we are left free to inquire whether Evolution can throw any new light on the actual course of sin in the human heart, and so endow the Biblical doctrine with fresh vividness and force.

IV

THERE is one more obvious objection that may be raised against the Biblical doctrine of evil, to which we must give close attention, since it seems to rise

[1] Fairbairn, "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology," pp. 452-3. Coleridge long ago recognised that the real point of conflict between Christian and non-Christian thinkers is to be found not in any question of criticism, textual or otherwise, of the Bible—"the freest views on which the churches must learn to tolerate."—"The real question is whether there is a Divine root in Man at all . . . a spiritual centre answering to a spiritual centre in the Universe. All controversies of any importance come back to this. Coleridge would have been a great Christian thinker if for no other reason than this, that he brought all theological questions back to this living centre, and showed how they all developed from it. Apart from this postulate, sin was inconceivable to him, and in the same manner all sin was to him sin of origin or original sin. It is essentially the property of the will that it can originate. . . . 'A state or act that has not its origin in the will may be a calamity, deformity, or mischief; a sin it cannot be'" (Tulloch, "Movements of Religious Thought," etc., pp. 21, 22).

from one of the most fundamental postulates of Evolution.

That theory is said to be incompatible with the Fall of Man because it seems to necessitate the notion of Man as an evolving rather than a degraded being.

This objection may be raised, first, on general and *a priori* grounds, and must be met by a statement of what the theory of Evolution really does teach on the question of possible lapses into a degraded condition on the part of individuals and species; and secondly, on the ground of fact, which can only be met by dealing with the facts of human nature and history.

First, then, let us ask whether it is compatible with the fundamental principles of Evolution that a race of beings should fall into a state of degeneration.

If the reader will turn to pp. 20, 21, *ante*, he will find a reference to what Prof. Le Conte calls the "law of Progress of the Whole," as one of the special features of the evolutionary process. By this he means the progress of the organic kingdom in its entirety. It does not mean that each creature is necessarily an improvement on those that have preceded, nor even that each species or family is essentially progressive, but that the created order on the whole moves on "to some far-off Divine event" which is its goal and ideal. But the idea seems to be ingrained in the minds of many, that as Man is on the crest of the advancing wave of Evolution, it must follow that, whatever may be the case with individuals or even particular tribes who may have fallen or may be falling into a lower plane of being, the family of Man as a whole is and must be developing into a higher life psychically and spiritually, which of course negatives the notion of a universal Fall such as the Bible teaches.

Let us see how far this idea is necessitated by the

true theory of Evolution, which of course professes to be built up on facts rather than on preconceived notions on the one side or the other.

The impression given by some of the textbooks of Science, that the only law of Evolution is that of development, is misleading in the extreme. Side by side with upward evolutionary processes, there are, as we have already seen, lateral movements, which are neither upward nor downward (specialisation); and there are also true downward movements (degeneration), which affect not only individuals, but whole races of creatures. It is a law so interesting and so important in its bearings on our particular subject, that we will give it our close attention for a little while.

The great condition of progress in the organic world is that the evolving creature should be in growing harmony with its environment. When this condition is fulfilled, we find an upward movement, *i.e.* a movement towards improvement of type. When, however, as often happens, there is a lack of correspondence between the creature and its environment, there is either degeneration, if the disharmony is not so great as to endanger life, or extinction, if it becomes so dangerous. The chances of the persistence of a species are, therefore, in exact ratio to the adaptability of its organism to its surroundings. Now as the environment is always changing, though never in active co-operation with any of the organisms which it may be nourishing,[1] all the adaptation must be on the part of the organism itself. The variability of organisms is sometimes very great, and it is by no means always in the line of the creature's interests. There are thus many chances against the favourable evolution of any particular

[1] See Calderwood's "Evolution and Man's Place in Nature," p. 75 (1st Ed.).

individual or species; and when these chances are constantly and actively in operation, they sometimes lead to what we call Degeneration.

The action of this law is even wider than we would anticipate. As a matter of fact, we find its evidence in every direction. The number of familiar objects and organisms which are instances of its work is startling.

Take the vegetable world first.

Mr. Grant Allen, in his little work on the "Colours of Flowers," gives some wonderful examples of degeneration. The reason why flowers are coloured is in order to attract the visits of fertilising insects. He asserts that the sequence of colouring according to the ascending order of species is as follows: "*Yellow*, which is the original colour of all flowers, stands at the bottom of the scale; then comes *white*, then *pink* and *red*; finally *purple* and *blue*," which are the colours of the most specialised flowers, and are as a rule fertilised by the most specialised insects. Now the more evolved flowers sometimes, from special causes, relapse into former conditions. The gradation of colours is then from blue to red, from red to white, and from white to yellow. As they fall back, they lose their special characteristics, and sometimes their essential characteristics, such as the number and arrangement of their parts. Some become self-fertilisers after being cross-fertilisers, which is always a fall to a lower plane; and some become *anemophilous* (wind-fertilised) instead of *entomophilous* (insect-fertilised), these latter plants having "usurped all the best places in Nature." It is startling to find it stated that "green is a sign-post of floral degeneration," and that "grasses and plantain-like plants of open wind-swept plains are plants that have become anemophilous, which once possessed coloured insect-attracting corollas." When we think of the vast tracts of the earth's surface

that are covered with green plants and verdant grasses, two reflections are suggested, if the above statements are accurate. (1) How wide is the range of this law of degeneration in Nature, and (2) how what is degeneration in one direction may become a means of advance in another; for what is degradation in the *status* of green plants, is a necessary condition of progress in the case of that large portion of the animal creation which could not exist without green food. Truly it is not only in the human or spiritual world that one class becomes rich on the foundation of another's poverty!

Take the animal world. Here the evidence is more familiar and scarcely less striking. Prof. Ray Lankester puts the case thus, so far as it applies to this division of organic Nature: "Degeneration may be defined as a gradual change of the organism adapted to a less varied and complex condition of life. . . . In degeneration there is a suppression of form, corresponding to the cessation of work." Most of the degenerate animals have gone down in the scale because they have become parasites; others because they have taken to an immobile instead of an active life. A degenerate animal is at once known to the embryologist because it recapitulates in its embryonic stages the life-history of its more highly evolved ancestors. For instance, *Lernaeocera*, which is a parasite attached to the gills of fishes, has lost the well-defined legs of its earlier childhood, and become an elongated wormlike creature, fitted only to suck in nourishment and carry eggs. The *barnacle* is a degenerate animal which, swimming about for a while, fixes its head to a piece of wood, and takes to a perfectly immobile state of life. Its organs of touch, of sight, and of locomotion, atrophy; its legs lose their power of motion, and simply serve to carry its food into its mouth, which is no longer a mouth in the ordinary

sense, the true mouth being used for purposes of attachment, and the stomach taking its place as both orifice and receptacle; so that an eminent naturalist has compared one of these creatures to a man standing on his head and kicking food into his mouth.

All this shows that the principle of degeneration is an active force in Nature, and a little further consideration will show that it is not confined in its action to the smaller or meaner species or genera. Curiously enough, the biggest animal that remains on earth is a signal instance of degeneration. The whale has lost caste as a mammal because he was foolish enough at a time very long ago, when he was a true quadruped, to take to a marine form of existence; and Nature, jealous of unused materials and organs, has cursed it with the loss of some of its limbs, and a remarkable modification of others. The *baleen whale* has no teeth, though the embryo has (these are never cut); on all whales there are traces of hairy coverings which have been discarded; many whales have pelvic bones, but no trace of hind-limbs, while in others there are such traces as abundantly prove the former existence of such limbs.

There are indeed not wanting distinct signs of a process of physical degeneration in Man himself. "Civilisation—and the civilised state, be it remembered, is the ultimate goal of every race and nation—is always attended by deterioration of the five senses. Every man pays a definite price for his taming."[1] Thus the sense of smell, so valuable to primitive Man, has largely disappeared in many persons; the muscles for the erection of the ear have been almost entirely aborted, and as compared with savage races, and still more with the lower animals, "we are almost deaf"; the

[1] Drummond, "Ascent of Man," p. 135.

skin has lost its protective covering, the teeth are rapidly degenerating,[1] and it is being found necessary to resort to such artificial methods as gymnastics and athletics to keep up the efficiency of the muscular system. Though the results of special training show that the possibilities of the body in civilised Man are largely within reach of recovery, it is certain that there is a slow principle of physical deterioration at work. It is also very suggestive that this process is directly due to the fact that in other directions Man is evolving. As he advances in civilisation, some of his bodily functions, both by use and disuse, tend to inefficiency. He no longer develops his eyesight in the chase, and so it becomes duller; in order to quicken it, he has invented instruments which supplement his power of vision, and so by the "cessation of natural selection" more people are born with imperfect vision than would be the case were those already imperfect in this matter weeded out before they were of marriageable age. He cannot run like the antelope, so he has invented various methods of artificial locomotion; this militates against an active habit of body, and so the evil is increased. Man indeed, in conquering Nature, tends to lose himself as an individual. "He has expanded till the world is his body. The former body, the hundred and fifty pounds or so of organised tissue he carries about with him, is little more than a mark of identity. It is not *he* who is *there*; he cannot be there, or anywhere, for he is everywhere. The material part of him is reduced to a symbol; it is but a link with the wider framework of the Arts, a belt between machinery and machinery. His body no longer generates, but only utilises energy; alone he is but a tool, a medium,

[1] It is stated that Neolithic Man wore down his teeth to the roots without decay, while we lose ours often in early middle life.

a turn-cock of the physical forces."[1] This rhetorical passage, which so finely emphasises the growing supremacy of Man over the organic and inorganic creation, is from another point of view a threnody announcing not only that he has come to the climax of his physical endowment, but that the point of highest efficiency has been passed, and that the penalty of mental evolution is to be found in a gradual but real deterioration of his bodily resources. Thus while he progresses as a Man, as an Animal he deteriorates.

V

But, as a matter of fact, does not Science tell us that there has been a steady progress in the race as a whole *in the higher sense*? Are there any indications, apart from revealed truth, that he is a Fallen Creature?

In considering this question, we have to be careful to distinguish between intellectual and spiritual progress, and to remember that the former may take place even while there is distinct and fatal moral decline. It is surely not necessary to show that this is true of the individual; the sad proofs of such a fact stare at us from all sides. We all know men whose intellectual ability is equalled only by their moral shamelessness, who seem to have sharpened their faculties by an elaborate exercise of evil ingenuity, and who make use of their intellectual equipment for no other purpose than to degrade themselves and others. The question is, can this same fact be true of the race as a whole, as it certainly is of individuals, and even of communities at certain crises in their history?

We must also be careful not to fall into the fallacy

[1] Drummond, *l.c.*, p. 139.

of many anthropologists who take for granted that we find a true type of primitive man in the degenerate races of the present day. It would be as logical to say that we find a type of the original tree in one of its decaying branches. Primitive Man at least differed from the modern savage in this: he was the progenitor of all the civilised races as well as of these "arrested" or "degraded" types; and while some of the existent tribes of savages seem to have lost almost entirely the capacity for civilisation, *he* had in him all the potentiality for progress which finally issued in the culture of Plato's day, the saintliness of the first age of Christianity, the elaborate civilisation of the present century. When therefore so eminent an authority in Anthropology as Prof. Tylor says that the Tasmanians of to-day are probably the representatives of the Stone Age, we are not to understand by this that they are a true picture of all mankind in that age, but that they represent at best a stage in the physical culture of the race—a stage at which they themselves remained fixed, while the rest of their contemporaries swept forward towards the consummation reached by the civilised races of to-day. The difference between prehistoric Man and the modern savage has been aptly described as that between a first and second childhood. "The one represents the remnant of humanity that has failed to progress; the other must have contained in himself the germ of all the progressive peoples."[1] And therefore it is a complete *petitio principii* to attempt to build up a theory of the condition of primitive humanity from the materials supplied by savage culture to-day. We may gain dim indications of primitive habits, of the stage of outward civilisation attained by Man at certain periods, and of the external

[1] "Personality Human and Divine," by Canon Illingworth, p. 146 (cf. p. 109).

symbols of such faith as he possessed, from the data furnished by geological remains, but even these are not very valuable when we endeavour to reproduce his moral and spiritual condition, which *ex hypothesi* also must have contained the germ of the most developed religions of to-day. "If therefore we believe, as we do, that a divine influence is distinctly traceable throughout the historic period, there is nothing whatever to suggest its absence from the prehistoric races, and the presumption is all in its favour."[1] To quote another authority, of undoubted scientific weight: "It matters little," says M. Reville, "that the dawn of religious sentiment in the human soul may have been associated with simple and rude notions of the world, and of the objects of faith. The point of departure is fixed and the journey begins. In substance it comes to precisely the same thing to say, God revealed Himself in the beginning to Man as soon as Man had reached a certain stage in his psychic development, as to say that Man was so constituted that, arrived at a certain stage in his psychic development, he must become sensible of the reality of the divine influence. In this sense . . . we accept the idea of a primitive revelation."[2]

What kind of being Primitive Man was, and to what stage of spiritual enlightenment he had arrived when sin took hold of him, is a question which we are not bound to answer. It is pretty certain that it will never be answered. The essential point is that he must have been a very different creature mentally, and also morally, from the degraded remnants of ancient races which survive here and there in the savage regions of the globe. He was the discoverer of the weapons which they have only been able to use practically without improvement

[1] "Personality Human and Divine," p. 109.
[2] Quoted by Illingworth, *ibid.*, p. 109.

from immemorial times; his was the dawning moral and spiritual sense which has by response to Divine influence been brought to the perfection of the Christian conscience and life. Whether the fact of sin did not result in a disability which poisoned the spiritual nature at its root, and has shown a stubborn tendency to defeat what would otherwise have been a normal and steady progress in the higher life, is the problem before us.

Perhaps the best outline of what Primitive Man was in the essentials of his moral and spiritual equipment is given us in Prof. Drummond's marvellous exposition in his "Ascent of Man." Whatever may have been that writer's point of view regarding the Biblical doctrine of the Fall (he nowhere seems to have explicitly stated his view), the whole of the work may be accepted as true without in any way vitiating our hold on that doctrine. The "Ascent of Man" is in effect an exposition of the social and moral influences at work in the training of the human race. The writer expends an ingenuity that is marvellous, and an eloquence that is delightful, in presenting us with a picture of the way in which, far back in the animal world, there was a preparation for the emergence of true moral character in the cosmic order, as soon as a being arrived in whom these dawning qualities could be unified into a personality, and so given a truly ethical import. It is an idealised picture of Man in the early dawn of his history, awakening to his distinctive humanity, and filled with the elements of conflict and victory in the spiritual life. In a word, Prof. Drummond's book deals with Man in the same spirit as does the Elohistic writer of the first chapter of Genesis. His purpose is to show what went to the making of Man. What more there may be in his history he does not tell us, nor whether this "making" has issued in a masterpiece or a failure. What the religious

world now needs is for some one to take up the question from that point and deal with Man not as ideal, not as he was meant to be, but in the spirit of the Jehovistic writer who follows on with the tale of Man as actual, as he is in point of history and fact.

In making an attempt to deal with this aspect of a very difficult problem, we would guard against a misconception into which it is easy to fall. A theory of the Fall of Man from innocence into sin does not imply that he by that fact lost all the power to develop in other directions, nor does it even preclude the possibility of a kind of real moral development. No one can deny that a marvellous intellectual evolution has taken place, though not such a development as to furnish him any new powers or faculties. Civilisation is the record and the result of a vast intellectual-social development which has been fitfully, and with many an interval of pause and retrogression, accomplished within historic times. Literature and art, science and philosophy, bear witness to a more or less steady advancement in mind and heart on the part of at least the vast majority of the human race. Mysteries have been solved which were once unfathomable to the wisest; discoveries have been made which have again and again revolutionised the social conditions of human life, making ever for richer and more complex relationships between individuals, communities, and races; there has been a steady and ever-increasing accumulation of the results of past efforts and struggles, so that many mistakes can be avoided, and many disastrous experiments rendered unnecessary. We stand to-day on a commanding height of mental, moral, and spiritual attainment, representing the outcome of ages of effort and insight and high endeavour which has been transmitted to us from the past, and forms the basis of a future development which is bright with promise.

VI

All this may be freely granted, and fully allowed for, and yet it may be true that Man is in a real sense a fallen creature. His instincts for development may have survived the shock of a wide moral disaster sufficiently to carry him forward in many directions with almost unabated energy; they may have been strong enough, even in the very direction in which he fell, to enable him to make some headway against the dragging weight of the evil that holds him down. And if we take the actual history of mankind from earliest times we must remember that among the factors of that history are to be found those spiritual remedial forces which, flowing from the Unseen, have ever been acting beneficially on human life. God has never left Himself without witness in the world, and both in the dim twilight of heathenism, and the unfolding dawn of Judaism, there was always a Divine factor at work, lifting the fallen, and drawing the better spirits (and through them to some extent the worst) up the abandoned heights of holiness and truth. Since the full day of Jesus Christ, these remedial energies have escaped from the trammels of their earlier conditions, and have been potently at work leavening the world with a new life, so that there has been a real recovery in those men and races that have come under the influence of the Gospel. The problem is thus a very complicated one, and it is easy to fall into confusion of thought in dealing with it. All we desire to establish is the unquestionable fact that there has been from the beginning of human history, so far as we are in possession of its records, a traceable check to the development of the moral nature of Man, and that the evidence for

this recurring and obstinate mischief meets us on all hands, and is too weighty to be explained away.

It is a sidelight not without its significance in its bearings on this question that philologists, in tracing the development of languages, have long made use of the idea of degeneration in accounting for certain linguistic phenomena. Under certain conditions, in the mouths of this or that branch of the race, a highly elaborated language has sometimes become degenerate, and is no longer fit to express complex conceptions, but only such as are simpler and more obvious. This inevitably suggests the possibility of at least a widespread intellectual degeneration. And Prof. Ray Lankester points out that such a process has undoubtedly been taking place in history. All ancient records tell of it. The mournful ruins of ancient cities and civilisations, staring at us as they do from the midst of desert sands, or lying fathoms deep beneath, only to be laboriously disentombed in this distant age, are a sufficient proof that in the dim, forgotten past there were, here and there, on the world's surface splendid cities and highly developed forms of social and political organisation, which would in some respects rival the noblest we have since produced. Nor is it any answer to say that this may be true without the inference being forced on us that there has been a universal degeneracy in humanity. In certain directions at least there has been a permanent and apparently irrecoverable loss of definite gains that had been registered in the evolution of the race. It would seem from the study of the ruins of ancient civilisations, that they had mastered some secrets now altogether forgotten, and others which are only now beginning to be regained. What was the traction and lifting power by which the Egyptian builders upheaved those colossal monuments

to their buried kings—the Pyramids? We naively take for granted that it was *all* done by the unmerciful and tyrannical use of human muscle; but have we ever tried to realise the extravagant nature of such a notion?[1] It has been discovered also that these same Egyptians were possessed, as long as 5,000 years ago, of a highly complex form of civilisation; and that, later on, they had a thorough knowledge of some branches of the higher mathematics, and of astronomical science. And quite recently the writer was assured by a workman in metal that they were in possession of a secret that has since been entirely lost—that of welding bronze with the hammer, whereas we can only treat it in the molten state and run it into moulds. As a matter of fact, we do not know but that there lie buried beneath the accumulated drifts of time relics of still higher secrets, the very memory of which has died, and which, when recovered, will give us a new idea of the highly developed character of the forgotten civilisations of the past.

Even within the period of history familiar to us all, there has been no clear proof of the point that is so often taken for granted—that the human mind is really evolving intellectually. It is quite true that within the last two or three centuries there has been a sudden and remarkable leap forward in the direction of Science, and that a new mastery is just now being obtained over the forces of Nature; but this is confessedly due not to the evolution of any new power on the part of Man, nor even to the increased efficiency of one already in his possession; it is simply the result of the discovery of a new mode of procedure. The application of the Inductive Method of inquiry is at the root of all recent

[1] "We now regard the Pyramids as the work of men's hands, *aided probably by machinery of which no record remains*" (Tyndall's "Uses and Limits of the Scientific Imagination," p. 55, Ed. 1870).

developments in every department of human activity; and if this weapon had been discovered (say) in the age of Aristotle, there is no reason to doubt that the results of which we are so fond of boasting as the peculiar glory of the nineteenth century would have become commonplaces long ago. It is at least clear to those who know anything of Greek Art and Literature, that in Philosophy, Sculpture, and the Drama we still look with despairing admiration at the masterpieces which have in part or in whole come down to us from the distant past. The statues of Pheidias and Praxiteles, the dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the pregnant narratives of Thucydides, the encyclopaedic works of Aristotle, the philosophic breadth and intellectual wealth of Plato—what have we in mediaeval or even in modern Art or Literature that surpasses these triumphs of the human mind? In the arts of music and painting alone is there any unquestionable superiority in mediaeval and modern over ancient work; in all else we are indebted for our higher attainments to better instruments of inquiry, and more efficient methods of collecting and grouping our facts.

These remarks are not made with any intention of disparaging the unquestionable value of modern culture, but of showing in what direction we are to look for an explanation of it. And they bear on our special subject in this way. If it is by no means clear that the human mind as such has been in active process of evolution within the historic limits that are open to our observation, but is apparently subject to waves of retrocession as well as advance, it is not contrary to the possibilities of the case that a great moral retrogression has taken place in which the whole race has shared; and if this is so, it is by no means impossible that this Fall should have taken place at the very outset of the career of the race, *i.e.* when it

was just starting on its distinctively moral phase of life. This is the position taken up by those who hold the Biblical doctrine of human depravity, as a consequence of the Fall of Man.

There is one consideration forced on us by history which tends to make this belief still more reasonable. If the story of those nations who in times past rose to positions of greatness and power and civilisation, and afterwards fell away, be examined, it will be found without exception that what brought about their downfall was a marked moral deterioration. So long as they maintained the measure of ethical purity which lay at the root of their greatness, and were faithful to such light as they had, they were steadily progressive. But when the period of struggle was over, they one and all began to relax their moral ideals, and the downward process began. Licentiousness took the place of moral restraint; the love of ease sapped all hardihood of character; the culture of pleasure crowded out the higher ends of life; and religion degenerated into elaborate and meaningless rites and ceremonies. Then came the end: sometimes suddenly and swiftly through the inroads of some younger and more vigorous race, whose faith was stronger, whose blood had not yet been poisoned by self-indulgence, whose racial ideal had not yet been dragged in the dust; sometimes slowly and gradually, through the waning of all the formative forces of national life, and the cancerous growths of social decadence. Such was the case with all the mighty nations of ancient times. Far beyond the range of recorded history we find traces of great empires, whose only record is to be found in crumbling monuments and mournful relics, bearing witness to what once must have been a high state of civilisation. On the verge of historic time we find clearer indications of the same thing; and

as we come down to the period when literature begins to leave its traces, we not only find richer evidences of the reality, but gain a truer insight into the causes, of national decay. And everywhere it is the same—a story of progress which is defeated by decaying faith and degenerate morals. Egypt, Accadia, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Rome—whence their fall? Of all, the same story is true. Their social order, their political power, their intellectual achievements, their brilliant conquests—all failed to preserve them from an inward paralysis of faith and will, issuing in an outward scourge of licentiousness that ate into the heart of their civilisation and brought them to their doom. How terrible and wasting this process of decay must have been is evidenced by the splendour of the civilisations which it sapped, and by the unspeakable records of shame it has left behind. All this bears witness to some inherent and widespread evil tendency in the human heart, which has shown itself everywhere, and which everywhere has defeated those instincts of moral evolution that have battled against it. So true is it, as an eloquent writer has put it :—

"Our most veritable, though saddest, impressions of Man's greatness, as a creature, we shall derive from the magnificent ruin he displays. In that ruin we shall distinguish fallen powers that lie as broken pillars on the ground ; temples of beauty, whose scarred and shattered walls still indicate the ancient, original glory ; summits covered with broken stones, infested with asps, where the palaces of high thought and great aspiration stood, and righteous courage went up to maintain the citadel of the mind,—all a ruin now—an archangel in ruins."[1]

Now this repeated and widespread disability does not, as we have hinted, mean that there is not a kind

[1] Horace Bushnell in his striking sermon on the "Dignity of Human Nature shown from its Ruins," in "The New Life."

of moral progress in the race. The instincts toward development are not dead even in sinful guilty men. If evil tends to perpetuate itself, so does good, and there is a sense in which there has been a real advance in moral condition, *pari passu*, if we may say so, with its periodical degradation. "Gross forms of evil are outgrown. Progress slowly removes some ills and crimes from general life; civilisation banishes the forms of cruelty that belong to barbarism; evils that once were common have become impossible."[1] The lessons taught by the downfall of one nation after another have not been altogether lost upon those succeeding to their heritage of power and sovereignty; thus, probably, no two races have fallen in quite the same way. But this undoubted fact in no way invalidates the great truth we have been expounding. If old evils pass away, others arise out of the new conditions; coarser forms of vice and crime give way to more refined and cultured indulgences; and though there seems to be a steady advance in many directions, closer inspection soon reveals the old foe behind a new face. Even that stern monitor Experience only appears able to help men and peoples to avoid *old* pitfalls; and even as they turn their steps away from them, fresh ones open up, into which they fall as though they had never fallen before. The open shame of Sodom and Gomorrah may never flaunt itself in the streets of Paris or London. It does not follow that these cities are not honeycombed with vices equally unnatural, though garbed in less revolting forms.

Whether this solid phalanx of facts is to be taken as a corroboration of the Biblical doctrine of the Fall or not, it is clear that any new explanation, to be

[1] "An outline of Christian Theology," by W. N. Clarke (Cambridge, Mass.), p. 218.

adequate, must take full note of them, and not be content to explain other phenomena, while leaving these out of account. There are certain aspects of human life, we are well aware, which are explicable on the hypothesis that Man is a steadily evolving creature; but such a hypothesis is incapable of meeting the whole case as stated above. The view most consistent with the teachings of Christian Theology, as well as the facts and deductions of Evolutionary Science, is that he manifests all the *instincts* and *aptitudes* of a developing life, morally as well as mentally, but that these are held in check by a deep-rooted moral poison that has mingled with the very springs of life

"*The Sting of Death is—Sin.*'
ST. PAUL

Chapter V.—The Relation between Death and Sin

An Old Problem reopened—Biological Function of Physical Death—Does the Bible teach that Bodily Death was the Result of a Spiritual Disaster?—The Jehovist and St. Paul—The Old Faith and the New Science co-ordinated—Christ's Victory over Death—"All Hail!"

I

THERE is one vexed problem arising out of the relation between Death and Sin supposed to be taught in Scripture, which we must deal with at some length, because it has received new emphasis since the birth of biological science during the last half-century.

The basis of this doctrine is to be found in the words of the woman in Eden: "Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, *lest ye die*."[1] Till recent times this was understood to mean that physical death in creation was the direct fruit of Man's sin, apart from which neither animals nor men would taste of it. All creatures, it was assumed, were born naturally immortal; and but for the transgression of Adam, we should be immortal still, as well as all the lower kingdoms of life.

This view seemed to our forefathers to receive an absolute and Divine authority, because they believed it to be vitally interwoven with the teachings of St. Paul on

[1] Gen. iii. 3.

the same subject. On the face of it, many of his words appear to bear this interpretation. In his great argument in the Epistle to the Romans, and in a passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, there is much that gives colour to the idea that he believed physical death to be the natural fruit and penalty of sin. "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned. . . ."[1] "For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ."[2] "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."[3] These and other passages in which the same idea is implied give a clear and distinct impression that Death, *in some sense or other*, was the result of Sin.

On the other hand, it is now proved with equal clearness by geology and by biology that death, so far from being an interloper into the world, has been here from the beginning, or almost from the beginning, of the appearance of life. Geology has heaped up the evidence of the essential mortality of the animal creation in every stratum of rock since the Tertiary formations were laid down. "Thousands of years before the existence of the human species, generations of living creatures came and passed away, and they passed away by that precise method whereby human lives now disappear,—the method of death."[4] Biology again, approaching the problem from another point of

[1] Rom. v. 12.
[2] *Ibid.*, verse 17.
[3] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.
[4] "Can the Old Faith Live with the New?" by Dr. Matheson, p. 280.

view, proves from the very laws of life, that as it had a beginning, so it must have an end. If Man had never sinned, or if he had never appeared on earth as the highest of all the hierarchies of life, the creatures that already existed would have died just as surely, and in the same manner, as now. Latterly, as we shall presently see, biology has discovered what seem to be the place and function of physical death in the world, and these appear to be beneficent rather than otherwise, and to have been essential to the progressive pathway which life has followed from the beginning. By way of further strengthening the teachings of science, comes the universal experience of mankind, which testifies that death is a normal process in the organic world. In view of all the evidence available, it may be pertinently asked whether we can any longer consider it as a tenable belief that this vast and ever-present tragedy of death is the effect of a moral disturbance in human life, and is a punishment for the Fall of Man?

It is no longer possible to hoodwink our intelligence by such subterfuges as theologians of a generation ago were obliged to invent in order to dovetail the new science into the old beliefs. That God should have created the rocks as they now exist, with the remains of animals in them which could never have died because they never lived, is a hypothesis so extravagant that only a mistaken piety could have devised it, in a frantic effort to avoid a disagreeable conclusion. That the lower orders died an anticipatory death in view of the Fall is shocking to our moral sense, and may be dismissed without any more ado, since it outrages the very notion of God's justice. It is too clear that death is the normal ending of life for us any longer to raise a question on the subject. The evidence is overwhelming.

Are we then to conclude that the writer of Genesis

and the Apostle of the Gentiles were both mistaken in their attempt to link these two mysteries, death in the physical world and sin in the moral? Before we allow this to be the true solution of the question, it would be well to re-examine the real teaching of the Bible on the whole subject; for it is by no means clear that that teaching has been rightly understood.

II

It may be well, first, to look for a moment at the teaching of biology on the function of death in the organic world.[1]

It is affirmed by Weismann that the earliest organisms are potentially immortal. Unicellular creatures propagate by fissure, and the parent lives on indefinitely alongside of its offspring. Death entered the world contemporaneously with two other facts, which at first sight seem to have little relation with it. These are, the differentiation of cells into the somatic and the reproductive, and the simultaneous appearance of sex. In other words, death was the result of complexity in the organism, *the mark of a developing life.* It was the symptom not of a degenerating process, but of the contrary. "Its reign began with the coming of a new, more powerful dynasty of life." It marked a vital step in its progress. But for death the higher and more complex orders would never have come into being; Evolution would have been impossible. "If we suppose other laws and processes of nature to remain such as we know them to be, we may assert that there could have been made on this earth no garden, no flowers, no leafy

[1] For the argument in this section the writer is mainly indebted to Dr. Newman Smyth's striking little work on "The Place of Death in Evolution" (T. Fisher Unwin, 1897).

trees for them to sing in, had it not been for the entrance and ministry of death—had death never been sent along life's way to take from life its useless burdens, and to set its energies free for better adaptations and results ever more fair and fruitful. Man himself might not have been made of the dust of the earth, if that dust had not been mingled of the elements of the dead forms which were before him. We owe our human birth to death in nature. The earth before us has died in order that we may live. We are the living children of a world that has died for us. Biology furnishes thus to philosophy a suggestion of profound truth and of far-reaching significance."[1]

This sheds a very different light on "the last enemy," showing that, *whatever it may have become to us owing to our sin*, it was in the beginning a purely beneficent fact, the servant of life in the race. Living creatures have died in order that others might come into being, and the vital process be freed from what would have been a prison-house rather than a home. The same thought is pressed upon us when we look more carefully at the place of death in the life of the individual. It has been ascertained that the normal length of life is clearly determined on the principle of utility to the species. Animals live so long, broadly speaking, as it is to the advantage of their kind that they should do so. The golden eagle, to take but one instance, lives just as long as it is expedient, in order to secure enough eagle's eggs, and to rear enough young eagles to keep the species in existence. When the interests of the species are safeguarded, the vital function of the individual is over, and it decays and dies. Were it not for this beneficent law, the generations would jostle and crowd each other, and the struggle for life would

[1] Newman Smyth, *l.c.*, pp. 30, 31.

be so great that all happiness and progress would be impossible. The only possible alternative to this law would be such an arrest of the power of procreation as to limit the number of births ; and this would react harmfully in another direction, by rendering the betterment of species infinitely slower and more precarious, if it would not render it entirely for ever impossible. Death has thus a great and gracious office to fulfil in the world. It is here primarily not as a sign of dislocation and ruin, but as part of the original plan ; and if it assumes another aspect to our eyes, it is because it has altered its character to us, on account of some change in ourselves.

How then are we to understand the Scriptural doctrine? Must we set it aside as a crude attempt to account for the horror the human heart cannot help feeling at the thought of personal dissolution, and the breaking of our dearest ties, and the eclipse of our brightest hopes? Or can it be that for lack of insight into the real teaching of the Bible, we have been content with an interpretation which a little careful examination will enable us to correct?

III

THAT the Bible does not really suggest that physical death was introduced into the world as the penalty of sin, receives an initial corroboration in the very passage where it is supposed to be so distinctly taught. In the announcement of the punishment to be inflicted for the first transgression, it is a curious fact that the idea of natural death is brought in as though it were the normal heritage of our mortality. The real penalty is said to be, in the case of the woman, sorrow and anguish of child-birth, and subordination to the will

and authority of her husband, whom she was the means of cajoling into sin ; and in the case of the man, sorrow of toil, and a sense of alienation and warfare between him and the forces of nature. Then follow these significant words : " In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; *for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*" [1] Whatever hidden meaning these words contain, they certainly imply that man is naturally mortal, and that as he undoubtedly had a physical beginning, so he must in the natural order of things have a physical ending. The marks of his mortality are inwoven into the tissue of his constitution. He is of the earth, earthy.

If we turn from the earliest to the later Biblical reference to this subject, we shall find the same idea driven home by implication. St. Paul tells us that the curse brought upon the race by sin is lifted from the redeemed portion of it by Jesus Christ. " For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." [2] Now it is plain, as a matter of fact, that the salvation wrought through Jesus Christ does not involve any remission of the law of physical death. Good men die as well as bad men, and in the same physical sense. There is one end to the righteous and the ungodly. Their bodies decay and perish and pass into dust, and their spirit returns to God who gave it. With this fact staring him in the face, Paul yet spoke of the curse of death as having been remitted in and through Christ. It follows that when he spoke of death as having entered into the world through sin, he must have used the word in another than a physical sense.

[1] Gen. iii. 19.

[2] Rom. viii. 2. Cf. vi. 23, and the whole passage from that point to the end of the argument in chap. viii.

The key to this perplexity is to be found in a more accurate appreciation of the use of Biblical terms. Both *life* and *death* are used in the Old Testament in a sense of which we find no trace in the ethnic literatures. "What makes *life* in the case of man is not simply his physical being in the unity of body and soul, but that together with his moral relation to God. Life therefore is identified with God's *favour* and with *righteousness*. Nothing that lacks this spiritual element of fellowship with God is real life in the Old Testament sense."[1] The same thing is true of the converse. "Death is in every case the withdrawal of the Divine spirit of life. But in man's case it is not that alone. It is not an event of nature, but a moral effect, the consequence of sin. . . . This penal sense of death colours all that the Old Testament says of man's end."[2] It is not "cessation of being, but penalty and reduction of being, carrying two results with it—removal from the fellowship of the living on the earth, and removal from the fellowship of God." What lends horror to the thought of physical dissolution is not the mere passing of the breath and the decay of the body, but this sense of separation from the fellowship of God and man; that is, the privative aspect of death—the loss it implies of all that the living man loves and longs for. And it is because sin implies this deprivation of the presence and fellowship of God, the source of all life, that the Old Testament seers connected it with the mysterious fact of physical death. If this sense of attenuated life, and of removal from the springs of life, could be dissociated from the act of dying, then the chief source of the dread with which

[1] Salmond's "Christian Doctrine of Immortality," p. 196.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 197. The reader is referred to this masterly work for detailed treatment and proof-texts.

it was regarded by them would be also removed. The *curse* of death would be gone, and it would take its place among the normal facts of human experience.

A vivid ray of light is shed on the distinction between physical death as a fact, and its moral significance as related to punishment, in the attitude of our Lord on the subject. To Him, apparently, the only painful aspect of natural death is the dislocation it causes in human relations. This He feels so keenly that on three occasions at least He restores the dead, well and happy and joyous, to their friends.[1] In itself, bodily death is only a "sleep."[2] He never speaks of His mission as including the abolition of this process from human life; it is clearly to Him a natural law, and as such He was here to honour it as of Divine appointment. But there is a state of the soul of man which He speaks of as a state of death, because it is altogether the result of sin, and it was the very purpose of His work to bring men out of this condition of spiritual death into the enjoyment of *life*. "He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but *hath passed out of death into life*."[3] "For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."[4] "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My word, he shall never see death."[5] It was the purpose of the proclamation of the Gospel, according to the fourth Evangelist, to enable men to have life in Christ's name.[6] Death was the state of sin in which men were till they came into the "light of life."[7] When once they received His message and were spiritually joined to Him, then

[1] Luke vii. 11-15; Matt. ix. 23-25; John xi. 43, 44.
[2] Matt. ix. 24; John xi. 11: cf. xi. 14. See also Acts vii. 60
[3] John v. 24.
[4] John vi. 33: cf. 1 John iii. 14.
[5] John viii. 51.
[6] John xx. 31: cf. xvii. 3.
[7] John viii 12: cf. i. 4.

physical death was no more to be dreaded ; it had lost its retributive and terrible character. "He that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." [1]

It is clear also that what weighed upon Him in view of His own death was not the physical suffering, nor the mere fact of dissolution, but the knowledge that it was associated with the bearing of sin's penalty. He died "for us," the "just for the unjust," and it was the heavy weight of human guilt that pressed Him down into the depths of sorrow and woe. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto *death*." [2] The suggestion of the words is that He felt desolate and homeless, that He was separated from that constant and beautiful fellowship with His Father which was the real joy of life to Him. That is to say, death was nothing to Him except in the intensified form of the experience suggested in the Old Testament conception. To be severed from God, the fountain of life, to be spiritually forsaken and alone in the universe—*that was death*, in the mind of the Son of God. To be restored to the sense of Divine companionship, to be in vital relation with the source of the highest life—that was "life indeed." To a soul in that state, physical death was nothing but an outward change which was like *sleep* [3]—a condition which leads normally to a revived and intensified form of life.

The more we examine the writings of St. Paul in

[1] John xi. 25.

[2] Matt. xxvi. 38.

[3] This is the expression used by our Lord in referring to the deaths of the little daughter of Jairus and of Lazarus (*v.* Matt. ix. 24 and John xi. 11 : cf. in the latter instance vv. 13, 14, where Jesus uses both terms for the same fact). St. Paul also uses the term *sleep* for death. See 1 Cor. xv. 20, 51 ; 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14 : cf. Acts vii. 60, xiii. 36 ; 2 Pet. iii. 4. These passages suggest that the apostles fell naturally into this characteristic expression of our Lord in speaking of physical death.

the light of what we have just said, the more clearly, we think, it will be seen that he does not make the obvious mistake of representing natural death as the direct penalty of human sin. His doctrine in its essentials is that of Jesus as we find it developed in the Johannine Gospel and Epistles. He certainly connects the idea of physical death with a moral penalty,[1] but the penalty seems rather to be something superadded to the natural fact than to consist in death itself. "The sting of death is *sin*"—that is what makes it what it is to our experience, giving it a character which otherwise it would not have. There is a curse in it. "Were there no darkness in our lives—did sin not waste and ruin them—then death could hardly be to us what it is. There would be no terror in it. The gloom of it would vanish or be less oppressive. It is this full meaning of the fact, even on its physical side, for moral creatures, that the apostle brings into causal connection with sin. Death was what it was to him and to his fellow-Christians because of sin. The final shadow rested on human life because that life had turned itself away from God, and chosen the evil rather than the good."[2] If this was what the apostle meant, it is easy to go with him in his complementary doctrine of the victory gained over death in Jesus Christ. By bestowing the "free gift" of spiritual life upon His people, and bringing them back to their normal relation to God who is its source, the curse or sting of death is removed with its cause, and the natural fact becomes once more a part of the beneficent order of God's government. When believing men die, there are no longer for them any

[1] Rom. v. 12-14; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 25, 26 and many other familiar passages.

[2] Tulloch, "The Christian Doctrine of Sin," p. 164.

craven fears, any retributive terrors; for death to them is merely an episode, leading to a larger life and a closer communion with all that makes life desirable. It is a putting off of the "mortal,"[1] the "corruptible," that the "immortal," the "incorruptible" may be "put on"; it is a loosening of the "tent-ropes" that the inhabitant may enter a "building of God eternal in the heavens."[2] It is even a glorification of the body itself, which in death "is sown in corruption" but "is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."[3] Paul, we must remember, is here speaking of physical death, which still remains a part of the inalienable lot of man; but no longer as something to which we are held in the "bondage of fear";[4] rather as something which is a means of release from the disadvantages and restrictions of this mortal life; nay, as *the* condition of entering on the unveiled vision and the unbroken fellowship of the blessed Saviour.[5] This is the very climax and joy of Paul's spiritual experience, a thought to which he returns again and again with secret but irrepressible delight, a "flying point of bliss remote" towards which his much-tried and wearied spirit wings its way with increasing longing and anticipation as his career draws to its tragic close. Death is once more transformed; and as he nears the dread hour he waits for the opening of the door as one who is presently to be ushered into the presence of his King.

"O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is *sin*; and the power of

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 54.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 1.
[3] 1 Cor. xv. 42-44.
[4] Rom. viii. 15.
[5] 1 Cor. xiii. 12; Phil. i. 23, 24.

sin is the law: but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord."[1]

IV

We can now see without difficulty in what manner the old faith and the new science are capable of being brought into entire harmony.

The biological aspect of death, and the Biblical, are complementary, not antagonistic. The former views it in relation to natural law; the latter, in relation to spiritual law. As a fact in the vital order, death is normal, necessary, beneficent; it is the condition of progress; it is a mark of advancing life. As a fact in the spiritual order, it has taken on a secondary character, due to our subjective condition as a fallen race. Sin, to sinful humanity, is a permeative fact, affecting our complex nature in its totality; poisoning body and soul, and bringing about disaster in both the natural and spiritual life. It is thus through no arbitrary enactment, but along lines of obvious causality, that death has been made use of as one of the channels of moral retribution. It is a curse to no creature but Man, nor would it be so to him were he free from the evil that dogs his footsteps and mingles with the flow of his life-blood. We often pity the animal creation in its death-pangs, as though the lower orders of life dwelt under the perpetual horror of death which haunts us. There is a striking passage in Wallace's delightful book on "Darwinism" in which he exposes this fallacy

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 55-58.

of false sympathy. "Where we err," he says, "is in giving to animals feelings and emotions which they do not possess. . . . The poet's picture of

'Nature red in tooth and claw
With ravine'—

is a picture the evil of which is read into it by our imaginations, the reality being made up of full and happy lives, usually terminated by the quickest and least painful of deaths."[1] But to our morbid and guilty consciousness, the "last enemy" lies in wait for us as the minister of a law which we have violated, and the executioner of a sentence which we have richly deserved, and from which the all-pardoning grace of God as revealed in Christ can alone save us.

As Dr. Newman Smyth suggestively points out, there are two ways in which death lends itself as the instrument of moral punishment.

First, "already existing as an adaptation for a natural use, it may be seized upon by the higher law of spiritual selection, and fitted to a moral use."[2] This is exactly what has been done in the history of the race. Death is invested, to the natural sinful mind, with unreal terrors, so far as its physical aspect is concerned; and these terrors are the direct result of the consciousness of wrongdoing. The sting of death is verily sin; but for that sense of moral obliquity that is in us, it would not make "cowards of us all." It is with this acquired character of death that both the writer of Genesis and St. Paul have to do. "Death, which as a natural event may thus occur without its approach being feared or its consequences dreaded, becomes the moral crisis around

[1] Page 39. The whole passage on the "Ethical Aspect of the Struggle for Existence," pp. 36-40, is well worth studying from this point of view.

[2] "The Place of Death in Evolution," p. 146.

which the alarms of conscience may be gathered."[1] We may add that death, in this aspect of it, is not only retributive, but preventive. The fear of death and of what may lie beyond has ever been one of the most powerful deterrents from crime and flagrant wrong-doing. And not till a man is saved from the power and the love of sin is it meet for him or for his fellow-men that he should lose this deep dread of death, this agony of desire to flee from it, which is the last fear we lose.

Secondly, death as a moral agency may receive an added "retroactive energy as a natural force."[2] That is to say, it may tighten its grasp on the body, and accelerate the process of dissolution, in consequence of sin. "Sin may render death naturally more evil; its reaction may tend to make it an actual curse." The intimate relation between matter and mind in the organic life renders this process, again, not arbitrary, but natural and inevitable. Sin breeds not only a sense of guilt, thus lowering the tone of the spiritual life; it also breeds disease, and thus saps the resources of bodily vitality. This process may be restricted to the actual sinner; or it may be transmitted as an inherited disqualification in the race, and so tend to lessen the length of life, and emphasise the pain and horror of death. Both these possibilities are actual facts. We know that "mortality becomes most corruptible among sinners." We know not how many of the diseases that afflict us are the fruit of evil habits in those who have gone before us; we are often ourselves quite unconscious of the fact that by our evil ways we are increasing our liability to physical evils, when to others the fact may be quite obvious. "Then the lust, when it hath conceived,

[1] "Place of Death in Evolution," p. 153.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death."[1]

In strict correspondence with this retributive character of sin is the work of the Saviour in freeing us from the bondage of death. His work is simply to restore death to its normal function, and to invest it with an aureole of hope and joy in place of the terrible penumbra of despair with which sin had surrounded it. By creating a sound and healthy soul in the body, He will gradually redeem the body to new soundness and health on its own account. When men have given over following the lusts and cravings that have so disastrous an effect on their physical organisation, the race will gradually become healthier and stronger; the more distressing forms of disease will be weeded out of the world for lack of soil in which to flourish; and it may be that when science has been redeemed and consecrated to highest uses, all disease will be cleansed out of the world, and the race will be composed of redeemed individuals, none of whom shall ever die except of natural decay and old age. And by investing death with all sweet and beautiful associations, the Lord Jesus has worked an unspeakable benefit to His people. The writer—if he may be permitted reference to a personal experience—will not readily forget the rush of joy which swept over him when, one day, in reading the account of the Resurrection of Jesus, he came upon the scene where the Risen Saviour meets the women returning from the sepulchre, and read His greeting to them—"All hail!"[2] He had come back from the Spirit-land, from the land of shades and disembodied spirits, peopled to our imagination by so many unknown terrors, and His message to His friends was one full of reassurement. He came back His old self, but a profounder air of peace seems to

[1] James i. 15. [2] Matt. xxviii. 9.

have enveloped His mind than at any time during His previous life. No haunting terror lingered about His eyes, no aroma of mortality or decay breathed from His presence, no trace of having passed through desolating wastes of spiritual loneliness clung to Him; but a sense of indescribable elation, of subtle and deep-seated joy, flowed out of Him both then and on His other appearances to His disciples. "All hail!" "Peace be unto you!"[1]—these were the greetings He gave His own on revisiting them for a while. Can we wonder that this vision of the Saviour, as verily conqueror over death and hell, transformed their lives, and sent them forth full of a calm readiness to meet the death which till then they had dreaded so much? For His victory over death is the victory of all who are His. When our dear ones slip out of our reach on their way into the "valley of the shadow," and we can do no more for them, it is into His hands we commit their spirits, and we know that He will take care of them there as He did here; when we ourselves "fall on sleep," it will be in the assurance that the "last enemy" has been transformed into an angel of mercy, whose mission is to be our guide into the presence of our Lord. So death "is swallowed up in victory," and the narrow portal of bodily dissolution becomes a royal pathway into the garden of eternal life.

[1] Luke xxiv. 36.

"*Man cannot grow from innocence to virtue without temptation; he cannot experience temptation without a possibility of sin,—that is, of yielding to temptation; and yielding to temptation is fall.*"

LYMAN ABBOTT.

Chapter VI.—The Natural History of Sin

Spiritual Pathology—Is Sin the Result of a Conflict between Body and Soul?—St. Paul's Real Teaching—Heredity and "Original Sin"—Physical Analogies of Sin—Arrested Development, Reversion, "Mimicry," Parasitism, Disease, Perversion, Atavism.

I

WEISMANN in his striking essay on Heredity says: "The history of degenerate forms often teaches us more of the causes of change in organic nature than can be learnt by the study of progressive ones. Such investigation is therefore of the deepest interest."[1] By this means many a forgotten chapter in the history of life has been recovered to the eye of science, and the line of progress has been made clear in many places where otherwise it would have been doubtful and obscure. Many of the triumphs of Evolution have been gained by paying more regard to the failures of the process than to its successes. For the higher creatures, while they register the gains of life through immemorial ages, do not tell us all about the intermediate stages through which their ancestors have travelled in order to reach that point. The outcome is clear, but its process is obscure. For this we have to study those belated or degenerate creatures that have failed to advance, that have been left like milestones along the pathway of

[1] "Essays on Heredity," II., p. 3.

developing life, and so present us with the evidence of stages else lost to view, like the foundations of a building or the shed chrysalis of a butterfly.

In our study of Man's moral and spiritual nature we may proceed on similar lines. We can consider him in the grandeur of his faculties, in the achievements of his genius, in the triumphs of his heroism, in the beauty of his saintliness. This method will be inspiring, because it will prove what humanity is capable of at its best. But this method will not explain some of the most salient facts of our nature; it will leave much of his present condition an unfathomable mystery. And so we may proceed on another line, and study Man pathologically; in the light, not of his capabilities, but of his evil and sin; learning his greatness, to use Horace Bushnell's phrase, "from the magnificent ruin he displays," and arguing from what he is to what he might be. If the study of degenerate forms has thrown such a blaze of light on the development of progressive forms in the organic world, we may expect that the study of Man's moral lapse will be equally full of reward and enlightenment.

The mystery of sin is great; in its ultimate nature it baffles our understanding; we can no more measure its significance than we can take the parallax of the fixed stars. But while we may be unable to dispel the darkness in which its origin is shrouded, a frank and careful study of the forms in which it manifests itself in human life may be of no little use to us, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it will enable us to come to a more adequate doctrine of sin; practically, it will give us many a hint as to how it may be avoided and overcome in our own lives. There are many ways of doing this; in this chapter it will be our aim to view it analogically in relation to those abnormalities in the

organic world to which it bears so many striking resemblances. Without for a moment falling into the obvious fallacy of those who find a physical origin for it in all its manifestations, there are certain clearly marked lines of analogy between sin and the organic failures, degradations, and lapses of which Nature is so full.

In what form precisely the first solicitation to do wrong appeared before the dawning moral sense of Man we shall never know, nor is it needful that we should. The essentials of the situation are, that he should have become possessed of sufficient moral insight to recognise a higher and a lower alternative, and of a sufficiently developed will to be in a position to choose either. Though no one has given the slightest proof of such a statement, it may be that he was a Nature-worshipper, and that his creed, so far as it was formulated at all, was a species of Fetichism. Such an idea has been discovered by ingenious theologians even in Genesis, where the "sound of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day" brings such terror into the hearts of the newly fallen pair.[1] It is not the form of intellectual belief that is vital to an act of wrongdoing, but the sense of the "dividing ways," the call of the "better part," the choice of the lower alternative in face of the fact that the higher might have been freely taken Whether the first sin was an act of passion, or an unnatural sensuous indulgence, or the breach of a social regulation ; whether it was in itself a trifle, or a deed entailing bitter and fatal consequences to the doer and to others,—all this is non-vital. Small events may bring direst disaster in their train ; and the eating of an "apple," if only it was done as an act of defiance against the felt will of God, would be quite enough to start a race on its downward career, and be the beginning

[1] Gen. iii. 8 : cf. 2 Sam. v. 23, 24.

of moral death and destruction. Many of the most wretched criminals have commenced their fall into evil ways through acts as simple and as fatal. The beginnings of sin, as of all cumulative processes, may thus have been infinitesimally small and trifling to the outward view. It would be against all analogy were it otherwise. The day of the Devil, like the Kingdom of God, came not with observation. In the highlands of prehistoric time the fountain of the moral life was tainted with a little poison, and to-day the broad rivers of humanity show the pollution.

II

A MORE fruitful line of speculation is that which finds the origin of sin in a conflict between the higher and lower natures of Man. The course of Man's evolution from the animal to the moral necessitated a struggle between the new and the old elements ere they could be brought into a higher unity. The story of this struggle is the story of human effort towards inward adjustment and harmony—in Mr. Fiske's picturesque phrase, the "throwing off of the brute inheritance."

There is much in our inner experience which tallies with this striking figure of speech. It also seems to find a remarkable corroboration in the central chapters of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where the conflict of the "flesh" and the "spirit" is so graphically and subtly told. Henry Ward Beecher says that "it is out of the power of any man to give connected and perfect interpretation of these two immortal chapters, the seventh and eighth of Romans, except upon the substantial theory of Evolution."[1] But if we consider Man as possessed of a dual nature, "subordinately as an animal

[1] "Evolution and Religion," p. 76.

with a superinduced spiritual being, an animal at the bottom and a spiritual being at the top, and the two struggling for supremacy,—the seventh of Romans will be very thoroughly interpreted as a commentary on the facts set forth by science and history. If we enter into the eighth chapter of Romans with the understanding that men have advanced to a period in which the direction of the soul of God upon their soul has given them a victory over their animal nature, we shall begin to sound the depths of this wonderful chapter. And we shall see flashes of a philosophy, strange to the Hebrew mind,—strange in Paul's,—yet manifest here, revealing in some sort an account of why the world has been made as it has been made."[1]

There is, as we have just said, much in our inner experience which seems to tally with this conception. Man is described as a composite being, the various elements of which are at war with one another, the "spirit warring against the flesh," and the "flesh against the spirit"; in which we find an explanation of the sometimes hopeless dualism in our moral consciousness, which makes us feel almost as though we were two persons at cross-purposes with each other, resulting in a struggle so deadly, that Paul, good man as he was, could find no hope for himself except on the basis of a reinforcement of moral power from on high.

At the same time, there is in this interpretation of the great apostle's doctrine a fallacy which is but seldom recognised among the exponents of Evolution —a fallacy that, like a great many others, arises from ambiguity of terms. Paul's use of the term "flesh" is itself, to a cursory view, ambiguous, though a closer exegesis reveals a perfectly clear and consistent use of the term to which he is always faithful in the develop-

[1] "Evolution and Religion," p. 77.

ment of his doctrinal views. First, there are passages in which it simply means the mortal or corporeal nature of man as contrasted with,[1] or related to,[2] unseen realities, where there is no necessary suggestion of corruption in the moral sense. This is the animal or non-ethical nature, of which it would be meaningless to predicate the idea of sinfulness. But Paul also uses the term to represent the natural affections or passions, *the psychical nature on the physical side of it*, as permeated with a principle of hereditary evil and under the condemnation of God.[3] Other terms, such as "the old man,"[4] "the law in my members,"[5] "your members which are upon the earth,"[6] are used synonymously. We must be careful, however, not to infer from this that Paul placed the origin or root of sin in the bodily frame. That is an essentially heathen notion, foreign alike to the Old and New Testaments. If Paul had meant to imply such an idea, he would be entirely inconsistent with his own philosophy of human nature. For many of the offences which he terms "sins of the flesh" have nothing to do with the animal nature as such—"wraths, factions, divisions, heresies";[7] and if the physical side of our being is essentially corrupt, how is it that he so often speaks of sin as though its seat were also in the "mind"[8] as well as the "spirit"?[9] Further, he speaks elsewhere of our duty to "yield our members instruments

[1] Gal. i. 16; Eph. vi. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 50.
[2] Col. ii. 5, in the same sense as "body and spirit" in 1 Cor. v. 3 and vii. 34.
[3] Rom. vii. 18, etc.
[4] Rom. vi. 6; Eph. iv. 22; Col. iii. 9.
[5] Rom. vii. 23.
[6] Col. iii. 5.
[7] Gal. v. 20, with which cf. 1 Cor. iii. 3, where, as Prof. Laidlaw says, the charge is "strife," "divisions," etc., not sensuality; yet it is said, "Are ye not carnal?" See "Bible Doctrine of Man," p. 114, footnote; also his whole treatment of the question.
[8] Eph. ii. 2.
[9] 2 Cor. vii. 1.

of righteousness unto God,"[1] to "present our bodies a living sacrifice,"[2] to regard our "bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost";[3] the "body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body,"[4]—all of which ideas are incompatible with the identification of the physical or animal nature with the seat of sin. In a word, Paul used the term "flesh" as a convenient means of describing the "corrupt nature in the individual man, for the obvious reason that it is in the course of the flesh, or of the ordinary production of human nature, that the evil principle invariably originates and comes to light."[5]

There is another obvious reason for this use of terms, and so far the interpretation put upon Paul's language by Fiske and Beecher is right—that once the principle of evil had entered into human nature, it found in the unregulated bodily passions, which were the true heritage of the animal nature, ready and effective instruments for the working out of its will. That is to say, since it is of the nature of sin to act in the line of least resistance, it would inevitably fasten on these dominant bodily passions as channels for its action, as fuel for its fire. At the same time the animal side of human nature is in itself as non-ethical as it is in the brutes from which Man inherits his physical organisation; the *will alone is ethical*, and therefore the will alone can be the true seat of sinful act and bias. Thus what is in a wild beast but the natural activity of its bodily functions, the normal play of its instincts, may in Man become wrongdoing and sin. The rage of the tiger is but Nature's psychic equipment, enabling that animal to defend its young and obtain its needful food. So with the cunning of the wolf, the stealthy glide of

[1] Rom. vi. 13
[2] Rom. xii. 1.
[3] 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19.
[4] 1 Cor. vi. 13.
[5] Laidlaw, p. 119.

the serpent, the elaborate circumspection and sudden fury of the lion. What in an animal is healthy sexual instinct, in Man may become lust; what in a panther is mere killing, in him may be murder; what in a harmless and otherwise defenceless bird (that lures away the intruder from its nest by pretending to a broken wing) is a legitimate because unconscious ruse, in Man may degenerate into cowardly cunning, vainly trying to avoid the righteous consequences of his misdeeds.[1] That vast change in Man whereby on the material of these animal endowments the moral sense which he alone possesses works, altogether alters the theatre of events. Action becomes conduct, disposition is transformed into character, psychical necessity is lifted into the dignity of a self-wrought destiny. When we are told, therefore, that the process of human evolution is one in which we merely throw off the "brute inheritance," the description is misleading, where it is not false. What we have to throw off is not the "brute" in the natural sense, but in the human sense. For when a man is a "brute" he is worse than a brute, because he is ideally so much more than a brute. With a moral endowment in virtue of which he is capable of using all the animal passions and propensities for moral ends, he has in all ages used them for immoral ends, and it is the function of grace to give him the power of "throwing off" this inherited tendency, and of starting afresh in the line of his true spiritual development. In this derivative sense alone is it possible to speak of human progress as a "throwing off of

[1] Mr. Rudyard Kipling in his "Jungle Tales" enters with the sympathy of genius into this aspect of animal life. He has delineated its non-ethical aspect with consistent insight, and presents with wonderful power the fact that in them "killing is no murder," but a normal and natural process.

the brute inheritance." What is thrown off is not the brute, but "brutishness,"[1] not sense, but sensuality, not the "animal" nature, of which Man cannot divest himself, but animalism, which does not belong to him.

III

WE have already more than once referred to the problem of heredity in its moral aspects. This will be a convenient place to deal with it more particularly in its relation to the great mystery of Sin in the race and the individual.

"Heredity," says Ribot, "is that biological law by which all beings endowed with life tend to repeat themselves in their descendants; *it is for the species what personal identity is for the individual.* By it a groundwork remains unchanged amid incessant variation; by it Nature ever copies and imitates herself."[2]

It is important to notice that this vital tendency acts in two ways. In the general mood of pessimism that is abroad, writers on this subject deal with heredity as though it were a wholly sad and degenerative force. On the other hand, if it tends in certain directions to degrade an organism to the level of its predecessors, it is at the same time the grand conservator of vital force, restraining the tendency to vary within economic limits, and so enabling organisms to repeat and carry forward, under the action of other laws, the advantageous equipments of their progenitors. In other words, heredity means the preservation of all that is favourable in the life-series, as well as what is unfavourable. Like

[1] Jer. x. 8, 14.

[2] "Heredity," Ribot, p. 1 (italics ours). It would be difficult to express the moral solidarity of mankind in all generations more definitely than is done in the above phrase by the French psychologist.

all natural laws, it has its obverse and its reverse, its benefits and its disabilities, telling in one direction for progress as it does in another for stagnation. If we remember this, we shall escape a good deal of that cheap melancholy that so woefully afflicts present-day science, and predisposes social thinkers to pessimistic views of the future of humanity.[1]

It would also be well to remember that the fact of heredity is not to be confounded with the conflicting theories concerning it that are abroad. What is its precise meaning and mode of operation may be an unsettled problem; the fact remains unshaken. There is indeed no one theory of this great mystery that holds the field just now. Whether the hotly contested question of the inheritance or non-inheritance of acquired characteristics be ultimately settled in favour of Weismann and the Neo-Darwinian school, or of Spencer and the Neo-Lamarckian school, it cannot in any way invalidate the established result that organisms tend to reproduce their special peculiarities in their offspring, and that this stubborn tendency runs back far into the past, producing the striking phenomena of "reversion" and "atavism."

The point of vital interest to us just now is that there is a moral heredity as well as a physical, and that the law of the one is, with differences, the law of the other. We inherit dispositions as well as features, psychical temperament as well as physical organisation, tricks and peculiarities of mind as well as of body. The ever-restless forces of spontaneity produce the fact of

[1] Mr. Leslie Stephen, in his "Social Rights and Duties," Vol. II., chap. i., points out with much force that Evolutionary thought, which is imagined to have introduced a new element of perplexity into the doctrine of heredity, and to have complicated the fact of human responsibility, really leaves these questions, *from the ethical side*, exactly where they were before.

"individuality"; the stabler and perhaps the deeper "inertia" of heredity results in what we call "solidarity." Human nature in its moral and spiritual aspects "tends to repeat itself" as well as to "vary"; and this for good as well as evil. There is thus an identity of the race as well as of the individual. Freewill is but a spark in a mass of fuel, a little fountain of independent energy in a whirl of undisciplined energies, in which ancestral qualities are seen fighting for their foothold in the individual, and which he must suppress or govern ere he is truly himself. Character is the issue, for good or evil, which results from this inner conflict between freewill and heredity.

Moral heredity, on its theological side, issues in the doctrine of "depravity." It is based on the *law* that there is a tendency in the race to perpetuate sin from generation to generation, and on the *postulate* that sin has so taken a hold on the race that this tendency has actually become dominant and universal. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek after God. They are all gone aside; they are together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."[1] Whatever may have been the immediate application of these words in the psalmist's mind, there is no doubt that they represent a great truth. Human depravity, in theological language, is "total depravity." This does not properly mean that human nature is entirely and without qualification evil, but that there is in it a taint, a bias towards evil that lowers the tone of his whole being, just as a vapour pervading the atmosphere contaminates the sunlight. "With evil once begun, the race is a succession of tainted individuals,—an organism that works toward the continuance of evil.

[1] Psalm xiv. 2, 3.

Not but that good is transmitted at the same time, for it goes along with evil."[1] The worst is that the evil has contaminated the springs of action, so that everything is affected by it. "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,"[2] writes the apostle; and his candour is echoed in the secret heart of us all. We know that, however fair to outward view are our best actions, they all contain this taint. There is a flaw somewhere in the purest and holiest type of human conduct. In the lowest, there remains scarcely a redeeming element.

By the laws of generation, acting in a way we cannot understand, this tainted stream passes on from one age to another. Its natural tendency is to perpetuate itself, varied but still persisting. Thus "no interposition of God was needed to bring depravity down from the beginning of sin to later times. But interposition was needed if the flow of evil is to be stopped."[3] For sin has the same qualities in the race as in the individual. The race indeed may be regarded as a kind of "comprehensive person," whose lifetime embraces that of all the generations—a vast organism in which evil lies as in a reservoir, and from which it flows into the individual lives of which the race is composed. But whether in the race or the individual, it is always something abnormal, bad, depraved—*something that ought not to be*, and which therefore must call forth the stern and emphatic condemnation of God.

But we must carefully distinguish between "depravity" and *guilt*, in the sense of personal blameworthiness. The theological meaning of this word *guilt* has nothing to do with blameworthiness, and it is a thousand pities

[1] W. N. Clarke, "An Outline of Theology," p. 218.
[2] Rom. vii. 18.
[3] Clarke's "Outline," pp. 220, 221.

that it was ever used to represent an idea so easily confounded with it.[1] Ethical guilt is necessarily personal; it is result of conscious and wilful transgression. It can neither be imputed, nor transmitted, nor transferred. It is as inalienable as personality. While therefore we may share in "Adam's" depravity, the tide of evil tendencies that have come down the channel of the generations to our own lives, we cannot share in his personal ethical guilt, for that was his own, as *our* guilt is our own. What we do incur from him is the liability to share in the punitive process by which the evil thing he committed is perpetuated in the race (in order to be finally purged out of it). In this sense

[1] The "Westminster Confession" is responsible for a great deal of painful misconception on this point, where it says, "Our first parents being the root of all mankind, the *guilt of their sin* was imputed, and the same death, and sin, and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity" (c. vi. 3). But the best among even moderate Calvinists have been careful to make a distinction between the ethical and theological meaning of the word *guilt.* Hodge says: "To impute sin, in theological and Scriptural language, is to impute the guilt of sin. And by guilt is meant not criminality, or moral ill-desert, or demerit, much less moral pollution, but the judicial obligation to satisfy justice. Hence the evil consequent on the imputation is not an arbitrary infliction, not merely a misfortune or calamity, not a chastisement in the proper sense of the word, but a punishment—*i.e.* an evil inflicted in execution of the penalty of law, and for the satisfaction of justice" ("Systematic Theology," II., p. 194). "To be guilty of Adam's sin is to be exposed by it to punishment—*i.e.* to the endurance of its consequences. Still the phrase is objectionable, since though the endurance of its consequences was punishment to Adam, it is not so to us. The constitution established with him was such as to expose us to the results of his conduct; but that exposure, or liability, *is not guilt* in any proper sense of the term, or in common parlance even, nor should it ever be so called. The child of a profligate parent is liable to disease, but he is never thought of as guilty. The term *guilt* always supposes personal transgression except in technical theology, from which we would banish it" (Payne's "Lectures on Original Sin," pp. 79, 80, note). If this good advice had been followed, it would have saved a good many theological heart-burnings and difficulties. See on this subject Tulloch on the "Christian Doctrine of Sin," pp. 180-199 (and note xxi. in Appendix).

"the punishment of wrongdoing descends far beyond the wrongdoer. Children are involved in their parents' shame. A family without any ill-deserving suffers many ills, and even a sort of death, from the criminality of its head. A nation is plunged into misery, and reaps the reward of iniquity through all its bounds, when its chief men stand condemned at the bar of moral judgment, or have plunged it into flagrant wrong. If it be true that sin is always personal, and God will render unto every man according to his works, it is no less true that all sin is diffusive, and carries with it a train of endless consequences, and many of them of a strictly penal character."[1] This is far removed from the degenerate doctrine of imputed guilt as popularly understood, according to which the personal demerit of Adam is imputed to each and all of his descendants, previous to, or independent of, their own personal commission of transgression. This doctrine is not only ethically but logically unmeaning. The rebound from it has been so great that an exaggerated individualism seems to be only too prevalent, and the solidarity of the race a fact frequently ignored in the popular theology. Men say, and rightly say, "Adam may be responsible for what he has made us through his sin, but we are responsible only for what we make ourselves, and not altogether for that, since he has had a hand in spoiling us." Traditional theology here indeed is a kind of Aesop's wolf. "A year ago I was not born!" cried the lamb. "Sirrah!" quoth the wolf, "if it was not you, it was your father, and that is all one!"—and finishes "with the usual practical application." We are, on the other hand, forced by our moral sense to pity and not to blame the race that has been spiritually contaminated at its fountain-head, and instead of piling

[1] "Christian Doctrine of Sin" (Tulloch), pp. 195, 196.

up a vast store of judgment to its account for the past transgressions of the race, to make more and more allowances for its failures in proportion as the evidence accumulates of the solidarity of mankind, and the unspeakable difficulty of working out of the constitution what has become so much a part of the blood and temperament. The peril now is for a degenerate pity and sentiment to take the place of the old degenerate hardness. The balance is trimmed only by distinguishing between racial solidarity and individual accountability. We shall then realise that, guiltless as we may be of Adam's transgression, we are still tainted by its consequences, and that so far it is impossible but that God should look upon us as "baddened" or "depraved," needing a renewal of life and a purification of our natures.[1]

There is one more aspect of heredity which we do not sufficiently bear in mind. It is that we are not only bound up with the past internally by that which we inherit in our constitution and temperament, but that we are born into an "objectified heredity" or environment. The social surroundings into which we come are the fruit of the past, and of the same past as is perpetuated in our own personality. In this environment there is much that is good; but there is also much that is bad. Thus the evil qualities we inherit find a peculiarly congenial atmosphere in which to grow; temptation from without, and predisposition from within, answer to each other, as "deep calling to deep." Were it not for this outward heritage of evil into which we are born, many of our bad tendencies might remain dormant, and never make their presence

[1] Dr. Amory Bradford has a suggestive chapter in "Heredity and Christian Problems" on this subject; see "The Problem of Sin and the Race," pp. 197 ff.

felt. As it is, they are stimulated into speedy activity "the sight of means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done." All this puts fresh emphasis on the call for social as well as individual regeneration. The Gospel is to issue in a "new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" as well as in "new creatures." Heaven in the future life gives the prospect of an environment made entirely in the interests of the redeemed soul. This, together with the tendency towards fixity of character in goodness, will be its surety of eternal life. And similarly the hell of the future must mean a condition in which the soul is left to its own self-created environment of evil. Here too fixity would be presumably, though not necessarily or absolutely, an attribute of character. In this life it is harder and harder for corrupt souls to change into goodness, even in the presence of so many remedial agencies. The probability is that it will be correspondingly hard—this at least seems certain—to change in the life to come.

IV

It is thus clear that sin began with Man, who is the first earthly creature capable of committing it. When, therefore, scientists speak of "vice among wasps," "cruelty among ants," "fiendish" rage among animals generally, they are consciously or unconsciously speaking in metaphor, and, if they mean more, they are illogical, for such terms have no meaning at all apart from the ethical will. At the same time, certain of the laws of organic evolution are applicable to human conduct in a derivative sense, and much light may be thrown on the mysteries of the inner life by so applying them. Sin may be likened to many facts that we find in

Nature, and especially do the laws of organic decay help us to understand the various forms which it takes, and the kind of mischief it works, in the soul-life. Let us consider a few of these.

1. The simplest law of organic life which finds its parallel in the moral life is that called *arrested development.* There are many types of creatures which, instead of evolving into higher forms, remain where they are, in a kind of stable equilibrium, while the rest of their species pass on to higher things. There are certain crustaceans and other forms of life which have not changed from the earliest geologic times, when their remains were first deposited, and their descendants are to-day what they were then, imprisoned as it were in a back-eddy in the vital stream.[1] The latest theory concerning the blind fishes of the Mammoth cave in Kentucky is not that they have lost their eyes by disuse, but that they never had eyes other than the pigment spots which they now possess. The species

[1] "If Nature is full of moving things, it is also full of fixtures. Thirty-one years ago Mr. Huxley devoted the anniversary address of the Geological Society to a consideration of what he called persistent Types of Life, and threw down to Evolutionists a puzzle that has never been fully solved. While some forms attained their climacteric thousands of years ago, and perished, others persevered, and without advancing in any material aspect, are alive to this day. Among the most ancient carboniferous plants, for instance, are found certain forms generically identical with those now living. The cone of the existing Araucaria is scarcely to be distinguished from that of the Oolitic form. The Tabulate Corals of the Silurian period are similar to those that exist to-day. The Lamp-shells of our present seas so abounded at the same ancient date as to give their name to one of the great groups of Silurian rocks—the Lingula Flags. Star-fishes and Sea-urchins, almost the same as those which tenant the coast-lines of our present seas, crawled along what are now among the most ancient fossiliferous rocks. Both of the forms just mentioned, the Brachiopods and the Echinoderms, have come down to us almost unchanged through the nameless gap of time which separates the Silurian and the Old Red Sandstone periods from the present era" (Drummond, "The Ascent of Man," pp. 141, 142).

had its origin in the subterranean river, and such of their number as found their way to the light outside gradually acquired organs of vision; while those who clung to their early habitat remained in their present condition of arrested development.

That there is such a fact as arrested moral development in Man is beyond controversy. The unique thing about him is that such a fact, when it takes place in this higher sense, is a sin; he is in a measure responsible for it. Growth or decay in an animal takes place through agencies beyond its control, as it largely does in the bodily life of Man. But growth of soul is not possible, under the conditions of the case, without the consent and co-operation of the soul itself. Since Man spiritually is a germinal rather than a complete creature, and growth is one of the conditions of his ever coming to himself, and since that growth depends on his own will, it is clear that when he declines to develop morally and religiously, it is his own fault. It was the sorrow of the writer to the Hebrews that his readers were in this state of arrested religious life,[1] and his urgent appeal was that they should leave behind the elements of spiritual childhood and "press on unto full growth."[2] If that may be true of undeveloped Christian life, how much more true is it of the millions who are practically unborn spiritually, and know not their right hand from their left in any high ethical sense? There are few more pathetic facts in life than this, that there are countless multitudes who have all the beautiful possibilities of spiritual manhood dormant in their natures,—

> "As the music of the moon
> Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale,"—

who yet will not wake to these possibilities, nor move

[1] Heb. vi. 1. [2] *Ibid.* (R.V. margin).

a step in order to turn them into a reality. "Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider,"[1] is an indictment that describes myriads of souls who are satisfied with living the life of animals when they are men, or who stop at this or that stage of moral development in ignoble contentment, instead of "going on to perfection," and so reaching blessedness.

In passing it may be well to point out the fact that this phenomenon of arrested development appears not only in individuals in every country and age, but seems to be a characteristic of whole races of men. The Tasmanians and Patagonians seem to be the victims both mentally and spiritually of some such blight; in a lesser degree indeed, this is true of all savage races; nay, it is probable that, so far as a progressive moral and religious life is concerned, Eastern nations as a whole are at a standstill. The same non-progressive attitude towards all questions of conduct, all ideals of character, has marked China and India[2] ever since the time when the populations of these countries attained their present form of civilisation. The marvellous aspect of this fact is that, in spite of the many generations that have come and gone since it began to be, contact with the Gospel proves that the check given to the higher nature has not sapped the springs of its vitality; for some of the brightest Christians of this generation have come from heathen stock. Of the lowest and most degraded type of humanity, it is true, spiritually, "he is not dead, but sleepeth."

2. *Reversion to type* is another law of organic life which illustrates an aspect of sin.

[1] Isaiah i. 3.

[2] Max Müller in "India and What it can Teach us" says that the India of the villages to-day is the India of three thousand years ago.

It has been well said that the "first condition of degeneration is not reversion but perversion of aim. . . . The physical structure that ceases to make progress oscillates for a time about a point, and then moves off toward some degraded condition."[1] First, sideways and downwards, then downwards and backwards, reversion always follows perversion. It would seem that just as in the world of matter there are two forces, one drawing sunward, the other earthward, so there are two forces in the vital world, one making for progress, the other for degradation. We must not confound this latter with heredity pure and simple, though it is one of its aspects. In heredity we carry forward into the future the accumulated vital possessions of the past in a perfectly normal way; it is one of the conditions of stability and balance in organic life. But reversion means that the organism harks back on some outgrown condition. It is a backward leap over one, two, or many generations, with the result that a discarded peculiarity, formerly useful, now useless or hurtful, is resumed and perpetuated. As a matter of fact hardly any organic abnormality is a pure freak; almost always it is a reproduction of a form once normal. Even in the human subject this is so. One of the most striking facts in the human constitution is the great variability of its structure, and Mr. Wallace says that many of these variations approximate closely to the structure of the lower animals. Darwin mentions that observations made in 36 subjects brought to light as many as 558 such variations, and in a single male there were no fewer than seven muscular peculiarities that plainly represented muscles proper to various families of apes.[2] The biological explanation seems to be that

[1] "Our Heredity from God," p. 82.
[2] "Descent of Man," p. 43 (2nd Ed., revised, etc., p. 90).

in such cases the balance between the static and dynamic forces of life are disturbed in favour of the static, which assert themselves to the detriment of the organism. This is atavism.

Spiritually, we find an important analogy to this condition. Sin in many of its aspects is to the soul what reversion to an earlier condition is to the body. In its broadest form, it is seen in the lapsing back of a civilised race into the condition of barbarism or semi-barbarism.[1] In a developing social community, it is seen in the recurrence of moral conditions which have been outgrown and discarded by the community as a whole. Almost all offences against the laws of a country are of this kind. Social vices and crimes are on the whole a recrudescence of acts which at one time were normal and legal—and, it may have been, *right* under ruder and less developed conditions. The customs of "blood-revenge" in primeval societies were perfectly justifiable, being the only method of maintaining justice between man and man; to kill a man now out of revenge is an act of murder, for there are adequate means of vindicating justice through the law of the land. Similarly, lynch-law, on the borders of a Western state, becomes lawlessness in a settled country. Polygamy—sinless in patriarchal times—becomes adultery under the light of the Gospel. Examples might be indefinitely extended of the same kind, but these make the principle sufficiently clear—that certain forms of sinful conduct are only a kind of "antiquated goodness." Circumstances, social relations, and spiritual enlightenment have developed the keenness of the moral sense; and thus what might have been done without wrong long ago becomes vitally and irremediably wicked to-day. The same thing may be

[1] Cf. the "Veddas of Ceylon" (see Tennent's "Ceylon").

seen in the individual life. What is natural and sinless in a child may be very blameworthy in a grown man; and what in certain stages of our spiritual life would be a venial and passing offence becomes in later stages a sure sign of a depraved and corrupt heart. The essence of this condition of moral reversion or atavism lies in this—that it is *felt* by the sinner to be a lapse into an outgrown stage of moral development; *it is a sin against light.* "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent";[1] *i.e.* what in those earlier times was an infirmity, now becomes a sin. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things"[2]—this is the normal condition of a healthy soul; and when the man or the race falls back into its "childish things," it is moral evil in the form of "reversion" to type.

3. There is a form of sin which arises out of an opposite tendency to this—a kind of repetition in the moral sphere of what shows itself in the organic world in the form of "mimicry."

This is one of Nature's methods of enabling lower and weaker forms of life to maintain themselves against the rapacity and cunning of their enemies. They cannot hold their own by force of arms, or swiftness of flight, or fertility of resources; and so they are endowed with the power of simulating the shape, colour, or habits of more active races. This subterfuge takes many forms. It is the secret of what is called protective colouring, by virtue of which animals are able so effectually to hide themselves that they are lost in the grass or the rocks of their ordinary habitat. The plum *curculio* at the approach of an enemy rolls up its limbs to look like an

[1] Acts xvii. 30. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 11

aborted bud, and falls to the ground. The common *mantis* or "walking-stick" is so like a dry twig that it is indistinguishable from one till it suddenly walks away. Certain birds and rodents inhabiting cold climates change the colour of their fur in winter to a dazzling white, so that they may be able to hunt for their food in the snow with impunity. This is also the secret of "ventriloquism" in Nature. Any one trying to find the tree-toad, or the cicada, or the common house-cricket by their sound, will be bewildered by the impression that there are several near by when really there is only one, and that one will not be easy to find. This is why there are so many apparent duplicates among certain species, one active and well able to take care of itself, the other dependent for its safety on the success with which it repeats the colour and form of the first. Creatures that simulate death are simply imitating lifeless forms around them in the presence of their enemies. The hedgehog is endowed with the double protection of a spiny coat and "simulation." Against some animals it can protect itself; against others it can only pretend to be dead, because it knows by instinct that these do not eat what they do not themselves kill.

But it is in tropical climates that this imitative instinct is found best illustrated. Prof. Drummond, in his "Tropical Africa," after giving striking instances of the myriad forms in which it is met with on that continent, says: "Mimicry is imposture in Nature. Carlyle in his blackest visions of 'shams and humbugs' among humankind never saw anything so finished in hypocrisy as the naturalist finds in every tropical forest. There are to be found creatures not singly, but in tens of thousands, whose very appearance down to the minutest spot and wrinkle is an affront to truth, whose every attitude is a pose for the purpose, and whose life

is a consistent lie. Before these masterpieces of deception the most ingenious of human impositions is transparent. Fraud is not only a great rule in the tropical forest, but one condition of life in it." [1]

Prof. Drummond here, as usual, allows himself considerable rhetorical latitude, but the passage sufficiently indicates where the same tendency reappears in the moral sphere. Hypocrisy is the colourable imitation of virtue by those who do not possess the reality. All forms of religious insincerity and pretence are an endeavour to reap the advantages and privileges of goodness without possessing any of its moral quality. There is no "lie" among the organisms that simulate the form, the movement, the hue of other organisms; for it is the fruit of "natural selection" pure and simple. Only a human being can be a "living lie"; only a man can be a Pharisee. But how much of the generic term "sin" is made up of varied manifestations of this debased instinct in the human heart; how many have "the form of godliness" without its "power"! [2] There are such as have the odour of sanctity clinging to their garments, while their hearts are mephitic with the fumes of selfishness and impurity; whose character is rotten, while their reputation is sweet; whose soul is a nest of spawning iniquities, while their "walk" is saintly; who on the highest authority are but sepulchres of the virtues, fair to outward seeming, but within full of "dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." [3] Hypocrisy has been described as the "compliment paid by vice to goodness"; it is rather a mortal offence and insult to it.

[1] "Tropical Africa," p. 179. See also Romanes' "Darwin and After Darwin," pp. 326-332.
[2] 2 Tim. iii. 5.
[3] Matt. xxiii. 27.

4. *Parasitism* is another fact in Nature which is repeated—with a difference—in the moral life.

This is one of the most widespread and fatal forms of degeneration in the organic world. "Parasites are the paupers of Nature. They are forms of life which will not take the trouble to find their own food, but borrow or steal it from the more industrious."[1] Plants are many of them parasitic; and among animals there are whole families, if not whole orders, marked with the same stigma. One of the normal conditions of growth is that there should be a perpetual struggle for existence; in other words, that food should entail hard exercise. When a species that has been accustomed to earn its living by the "sweat of its brow" (as it were) suddenly or gradually comes on conditions which make it easier to obtain its food, it invariably begins to degenerate; some of its organs tend to atrophy; "away go legs, eyes, and ears"; and slowly it sinks into a degraded condition of life. The law of Nature is that "you must secure food at the expense of work or at the expense of faculty." For instance, it is found that squirrels, in countries devoid of trees, burrow, and lose the power to climb. Red ants have degenerated owing to the habit of keeping slaves. Another species is "so entirely dependent on their black servitors that they have lost the power to build, or even to feed themselves." The dodder among vegetables is an instance of the same tendency. It begins its career with roots of its own; but it soon fastens on some adjacent plant, gives up its roots, and lives on its friend's toil. So with the mistletoe, and a thousand other plants. Prof. Drummond's instances of the hermit-crab, the sacculina, etc., are too familiar to need more than mention.

This is pre-eminently a social evil, and it appears in

[1] Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," p. 317.

countless forms in human society, where for the first time it becomes a sin, because wilfully and consciously committed. Were it not for social parasitism we should have a very different state of things in the world. As it is, a large section of society idly exists on the hard toil of the rest. Those who live on the interest of their property without giving back anything in the shape of social effort are parasitic. Those who, at the other extreme, live on the proceeds of open roguery and theft, share this doubtful honour with them. Semi-parasitic are those who make their living out of callings that are detrimental to the social welfare, and breed countless evils as their natural fruit. Drink and gambling have given birth to vast institutions that are carried on not for the direct harm they do, but for the profit that this harm brings to those engaged in them. Were it not for the opportunity of making money afforded by certain grave vices, and the consequent vested interests created, reform would advance at a very much faster rate than it does at present. There is in truth nothing more stubborn, nothing more difficult to remove, than this form of abuse. Like certain parasitic insects, it entrenches itself in the deepest-seated organs of the body politic, inweaving itself into the very texture of the social life.

In the spiritual world, too, there is a law that nutrition and work must go together. "We must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling."[1] But here too there is an evil and debasing tendency to depend on the efforts of others, and to have only a kind of second-hand virtue. Morally thousands live on the fruits of other men's heroism and greatness. "The world holds few moral choosers; most act on the judgment of others, or follow inherited custom"—without making

[1] Phil. ii. 12.

an effort to improve themselves or the world in which they live. Intellectually most people are only educated sufficiently to the extent of following other men's opinions. And in the highest region of all, there is a way of making the grace of God of no account, because we turn it into an excuse for spiritual sloth. The degenerate forms of Evangelicalism, equally with the "Molluscan shell of Roman Catholicism," pander to the poorest instincts of parasitism in the unregenerate heart. For they equally fail to distinguish between eternal life as the free gift of God in its inception, and that earnest strife of the higher life in the soul, whereby this gift is made our very own. This is peculiarly the peril of those who have many religious privileges. Liberties won by the blood of martyrs are used for no better purpose than to turn the narrow path into a primrose way, instead of an ascending stairway of unceasing progress. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!"[1] writes the prophet. Their doom is to be condemned to lose the power to benefit by the spiritual energies which they refuse to exercise or improve.

5. There are striking analogies between sin and *disease.* Indeed physical disease and sin are often inextricably entangled in their causes and their effects. A surgeon in a Scotch prison says: "I have never elsewhere seen such an accumulation of morbid appearance as here in the post-mortem examination of prisoners. In every case almost every organ is more or less diseased. Their moral nature seems equally diseased with their physical. Nine out of ten are of inferior intellect, but all are excessively cunning."[2] This coincidence of physical and moral abnormality has of late received the most startling reinforcement, and has

[1] Amos vi. 1.
[2] "Our Heredity from God," p. 91.

many subtle bearings on the theory of human responsibility and punishment. It does not, however, remove responsibility except in the extreme cases where the power of effective choice is interfered with. The soul is other than the body, however closely interrelated the two may be ; and though each has to bear the burden of the other, it has a burden of its own to bear which it cannot share.

Sin is like disease in that it is something that bears witness to an abnormal condition, is inimical to well-being and health, interferes with the vital functions, and tends to sap the very principle of life. It is thus the enemy not only of progress, but of life itself. The man given over to hopeless vice is in a state of disintegration ; moral perception grows dull, the voice of conscience becomes weaker, all the delicate affinities of the soul with God are atrophied, and finally the "wages of sin is death." This is the "second death" of which such stern mention is made in the Scriptures.

6. "Reversion to type begins with perversion" is a dictum which has been already touched upon. We return to it finally because in a sense it sums up in a word the ultimate result, as well as the initial step, of the act and condition of sin.

Moral perversion—this is sin. It is the turning aside of the will as the principle that controls the whole inward life of Man, from the path of its true life and rightful development, into a byway. So it began in the far-off past when sin was first conceived ; so it ends in the final tragedies to which it leads. Perverted will, perverted intellect, perverted affections—these are the hall-marks of the corrupt heart and life. "Sin," as was said in the chapter on the Biblical doctrine on this subject, when expounding the Hebrew word *avon*, "is not only failure as missing a mark, but perversity as taking a wrong

line." Self-will—we come back to this again—is at the root of the matter. When powers meant to be used in serving God and man are turned towards purely personal ends; when the brightness of the intellect is prostituted under the tyranny of vain ambitions; when beautiful affections are squandered on objects that are unworthy of a rational being's slightest thought; when the resources of immortal souls are concentrated on the pursuit of shallow futile pleasures, which exhaust the body while debasing the mind; when the spiritual abdicates in favour of the carnal in man,—we have a condition not only perverse, but hopelessly corrupt till there is a true renewal of the springs of moral life.

7. It is sometimes said that, whether the Fall as related in Genesis be a historical incident or not, it at any rate truly represents, in dramatic form, what takes place in every man's personal history.[1] With all our weight of heredity, we are born in an Eden of innocence, having no experimental knowledge of good and evil. To us too comes a slowly dawning sense of a law to be obeyed, a prohibition to be honoured, and a temptation to taste of the forbidden tree. And we all "like sheep" do go astray. We long to know good and evil by experience, and whether from self-will in the form of curiosity, or in some other more depraved form, we fall into the beaten way of sin, hardened by the feet of so many countless generations of those who have gone before.

Strangely enough, there is a biological law which seems closely analogous to this. It is one of the most

[1] "The story of the Fall of Man is rather a parable than a legend. It bears the aspect less of an account of events in the infancy of humanity than of a crisis in the development of an individual spirit; it is a hidden chapter in every biography, not an ascertainable event in the dawn of history" (Julia Wedgwood, "The Message of Israel," p. 95).

interesting discoveries of recent times that the embryo recapitulates the life-history of the race in a swift, condensed series of changes ere it reaches the moment of birth. "The embryo of a higher animal passes *now* through stages represented by lower forms, because in its evolution (phylogeny) its ancestors *did actually have these forms.*"[1] This process is a kind of physical race-memory, in which there are many links missing, but which does give a kind of imperfect picture of the pathway of organic Evolution in the dim past. One of the most remarkable features of this process is that, in the case of a degenerate type, the embryonic creature actually in its early stages attains a point of development higher than that of the adult animal, and then at the point (presumably) at which the race-degeneration began long ago drops back into the condition of its immediate parents. The Sacculina is an animal organism in which there is no sign of life beyond a mere pulsation of the saclike body into and from which water flows through an aperture. If we lay open this sac, we find the creature to be a mere bag of eggs and no more. But if we trace the development of any one of these eggs, we shall find that it first becomes an active little being with three pairs of legs. This larva is known as a *nauplius*, which differentiates into a kind of bivalve shell, with six pairs of short swimming feet and two elongated organs with which it attaches itself to a crab; after which the limbs are aborted, and the animal sinks rapidly into an adult saclike sacculina. There are dozens of low crustaceans which, like this sacculina, are free and locomotive in their youth, but

[1] For a treatment of this interesting question, see Romanes' "Darwin and After Darwin," pp. 136-155, and Le Conte's "Evolution and Religious Thought," pp. 148-182. This theory, however, is severely criticised in a recent work, Bateson's "Materials for the Study of Variation," pp. 8-10.

which, losing eyes, legs, and all the belongings of ordinary animal life except their digestive systems, go to the bad, as a natural result of participating in what has been well named the "vicious circle" of parasitism.

Can it be that there is a real analogy in the case of Man morally and spiritually? The condition of infancy and early childhood, with its beautiful promise and its high possibilities, presents at least some resemblance to this process. There is a time in which the racial tendency to evil does not show itself, when the soul seems clean from the stain of inherited proneness to evil, and even the dawning passions do not affect us with any impression of sinfulness. We all feel that there is a sense in which the Child is the superior to the Man. We long for the child-consciousness as though it were our lost Eden, in which we sojourned for a while, only to be driven forth, as Adam was driven forth, and into which we in vain desire to re-enter. As we look back at our life's pathway, we remember when this and that and the other sinful habit began to assert itself, as though it were some internal enemy that had been hiding in ambush in the unawakened soul, serpent-wise cajoling the will, destroying the "illusion" of innocence, and dimming the prospect of a true normal development. It is as though we carried within us the essential elements of the Fall-parable, and recapitulated the tragedy of the Race in the microcosm within. And do we not sometimes, in watching the growth of our own children, feel a sinking of heart as we detect the beginnings of faults which vividly recall the half-forgotten lapses of our own wayward youth, as though reproducing on the canvas of a fresh generation the blurred memory of our own moral experience? If what we have hinted on this point be true, we can see a deeper truth than we had guessed in the solemn words of the Saviour, "Verily I say unto

you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."[1] For it would mean that, by Divine grace, we must as it were take a leap backwards to that stage of upward spiritual progress where the feet of little children tread the clean and uncontaminated way of life, and where *we too* trod till the race-bias towards sin turned our feet aside.

These analogies, if they are cautiously followed out, with a due sense of the imperfection of all analogies between things natural and things spiritual, and if they are brought into the light of that doctrine of sin which is progressively revealed in the Bible, as detailed in a former chapter, will enable us to see that there is nothing in the Evolutionary conception of Man out of harmony with that view. In several striking particulars the Hebrew words for sin tally remarkably with the categories of organic life which we have been studying. "Arrested development" is but another name for "missing the mark," to "come short of an ideal end of conduct"—and this is *chatath.* "Reversion" is first, as we have seen, "to go out of the way," or out of the "straight"—like *avon*—then to go backwards and downwards. "Perversion," the *disposition* towards evil—especially that form of evil that manifests itself in "lawless tumultuous conduct," the "lawlessness" (*anomia*) of the Apostle John—resembles *ra.* And when we go behind words to ideas, we find in these and other cases a striking resemblance between biological processes and moral evil.

We are also helped by these analogies to understand the nature of sin more clearly, and especially to realise its destructive work in the soul. They largely explain

[1] Matt. xviii. 3.

how the race, meant for growth in the likeness of God, and with such instincts for moral development, has been struggling so long in the toils of sin, has been waylaid by so many perils, has been honeycombed with so many cancerous evils, and is still, in spite of the many remedial agencies at work, so laggard in its spiritual progress. This tendency to waywardness, to revert to earlier and outgrown conditions of moral life, to pretend to a better attainment than is really the case, to accept the privileges while rejecting the duties of religion, to fall into countless fevers and sicknesses of soul, bears witness to some deep-seated trouble in the spiritual life, having all manner of evil consequences, and needing radical Divine measures for its removal. We hope that we have shown more than that. Since the theory of Evolution has been preached by the votaries of science, there has been a tendency to lose sight of the reality of sin on the part of many writers on social subjects who have gained the public ear. The course of thought in this and previous chapters proves, we think conclusively, that this is due to a faulty psychology of the human will, leading to a defective theory of the moral nature of Man. And we have shown how easily all the older thought on this mystery of sin is capable of being translated into Evolutionary language, so that it can once more be seen in its true proportions, and while our pity for and sympathy with the victims of evil surroundings, and of hereditary tendencies, is immeasurably deepened, the old Scriptural view of moral evil, of sin as such, is recognised to be as true to objective facts, as it is wonderful in its interpretation of the inner consciousness of the soul.

"I believe that the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian Church has ever suffered, has been the effort of men to earn, rather than to receive, their salvation; and that the reason that preaching is so commonly ineffectual is, that it calls on men oftener to work for God, than to behold God working for them."

JOHN RUSKIN.

Chapter VII.—How a Fallen Race may be Redeemed

The "Strait and Narrow Way" of Evolution—No getting back to the Track—Impassable Limits to "Self-recovery"—How then may Man be redeemed?—Possible Methods—"Sifting," Education, Incarnation—Three Results of the Divine Method.

WE have now passed under review the chief questions that bear upon the Biblical and Evolutionary aspects of the mystery of moral evil, and have come to the conclusion that there is nothing essential to the older doctrine of Sin and the Fall of Man which the new science has made no longer believable. Setting aside, on the one hand, a literal interpretation of the early narratives of Genesis as untrue to history and non-essential to an accurate and helpful exegesis of Scripture, and, on the other, certain crude and undigested theories of human personality and moral evil which had been identified with an Evolutionary philosophy, we have arrived at a point of view which combines the essential teachings of past theology and of present anthropology into a synthesis to which each contributes its quota of truth. Man has been developed physically from the brute creation; mentally he is also akin to them; but there are unique elements of self-conscious, moral, and spiritual life in

him which separate him from them by an impassable chasm. He was not created with a perfectly developed nature, but with one in which the animal heritage was transformed by the presence of a spiritual factor which at its first appearance was inconceivably faint, but which was meant to grow into the dominating and determining element in his complex nature. His course, like that of every other creature, was meant to be one of gradual and steady growth. But at a very early, if not the earliest, stage of his existence as a race, he turned aside from the path of his normal development; and while his capacity for civilisation, intellectual progress, and, to a certain extent, moral growth was not destroyed, this twist in his spiritual nature proved an effectual barrier to his highest development, and reacted with fatal persistence on all the lower channels of his life; so that beyond a certain point he has never succeeded in rising to his ideal condition. History is a record of continual upward efforts, which have come to their climax only to sink into failure; and though the stream of progress has never ceased to push forwards, it has constantly had to change its course, and seek new and ineffectual lines of advance. If the story of the past has proved anything, it is that Man, individually and socially, is incapable of coming to his own; and that with an unconquerable instinct driving him forward to a fairer and nobler life, his final experience is one of bafflement and despair. His cry as a race is that of the Apostle, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[1]

The question therefore is one of vital importance, "Has God provided some means of escape from this blighting influence of evil and sin on the race? Is there a way of escape from the effects of the Fall?"

[1] Rom. vii. 24.

In approaching this question there is a prior one over which we must spend a little thought—"In what way may a Fallen Race be redeemed?"

I

It seems to be a law of biology that once a creature has drifted out of the line of development, through the failure of the power of adaptation to its changing surroundings, or a loss of inherent vitality, it can never recover lost ground. In a passage already quoted, Prof. Le Conte says of the lower orders in relation to Man that "the way of evolution toward the highest—*i.e.* from Protozoan to man, and from the lowest man to the ideal, the divine man—is a very *straight and narrow way*, and few there be that find it. In the case of organic evolution it is so straight and narrow that any divergence therefrom is fatal to upward movement towards man. . . . Once off the track, and it is impossible to get on again. . . . The tree of evolution is an *excurrent stem*" [does not Prof. Le Conte mean "a stem with excurrent branches"?], "continuous through the clustering branches to the terminal shoot—man. Once leave the stem as a branch, and it is easy to continue growing in the direction chosen, but impossible to get back on the straight upward way to the highest. In human evolution, whether individual or racial, the same law holds, but with a difference. If individual or race gets off the straight, narrow way toward the highest—the divine ideal—it is hard, very hard, to get back on the track. Hard I say, but *not* impossible, because man's conscious voluntary effort is the chief factor in his own evolution. By virtue of self-activity, through the use of reason and co-operation in the work of evolution,

man alone of all created beings is able to rectify an error of direction and return to the deserted way."[1]

If this passage be true in its reference to man spiritually, as it certainly seems to be true of animals physically, then there is an end to our argument in this book. Having fallen, Man has only to rise again. Sin having laid hold of him, he has but to fall back on his reserves of spiritual power to shake off the incubus. Having wandered from the way of life, he has but to turn back to the deserted pathway. There is indeed enough obvious truth in this position to make it a deadly and desolating error. For in many of the mistakes and lapses which we make, whether intellectually or morally, a certain power of self-recovery remains to us; and with better knowledge of the issues of life, and more favourable environal conditions, we are certainly able to reverse our course and to make up for lost chances. The spread of education is sufficient in most cases to put certain sins of carelessness and ignorance out of the question. Civilisation has cleansed the world of a whole brood of shameful evils into which, let us hope, the race will never again fall. And in our individual life, many of the wayward tendencies of youth are purged away by the sharp lessons of experience and the sense of inevitable penalty attached to their indulgence. Up to a certain point, and within certain limits, it is borne in upon us by overwhelming evidence that, "individually and racially," men may "rise, on stepping-stones of their dead selves, to higher things."

The crucial question is, Has this process of self-recovery an impassable limit? Is the power of re-adjustment in things ethical and spiritual such that Man has it in him to leave behind him all the degrading evils that have laid hold of his soul?

[1] "Evolution and Religious Thought," pp. 90, 91

Two considerations seem to force us to a negative answer.

1. First, there is the historical argument. In order to weigh the value of this, we must bar out of the evidence that line of advance which, according to the Christian position, is the direct result of a Divine interposition in human history. Those nations that came within the influence of the Jewish and Christian revelation must be set aside, for it is a part of our contention that the essential factor in their immense superiority to the rest of the world is the stream of Divine influence which has mingled so subtly with their thought and life. If then we restrict our vision to the other peoples of the world, we come to the most positive evidence that, so far from being morally and spiritually progressive, they are, without exception, either absolutely stagnant, or in a state of sure and steady degeneration. The non-Christian nations of the East, the savage races of the South and West, are confessedly stationary or retrogressive in all that makes life sweet and fair and beautiful. *All the progressive races to-day are those that have come under the direct or indirect influence of Christian civilisation.* Science and Art flourish only among them, and spread out from them to the rest of the world. More than this ; it is an indisputable fact that wherever the civilisation of the West penetrates, without being accompanied by its religious atmosphere and sanctions, it exercises a blighting and fatal influence on other peoples. They copy our vices and seem powerless to emulate our virtues. They fade away rapidly under the pressure of our material institutions and social customs ; there is no principle of self-poise or resiliency in virtue of which they are able to maintain themselves against us. This is so in a marked manner with savage races. In the case of Eastern nations, who seem to have been

from times almost immemorial in a static social state, the disintegrating effects of the impact of Western civilisation are not so evident. But that the effect must in the long run be disintegrating is unquestionable : our social order is clearly destined to break up their most distinctive institutions ; our science and our thought are supplanting their most ancient philosophies, and making their religions as incredible to them as they are to us ; in the end we are clearly destined to overpower them, and either lift them up by the contagion of our ideals, or crush and destroy them by the contamination of our vices. On the other hand, it is equally certain that where we go to them first with the Bible in our hands, and plant the knowledge of God and Christ firmly in their hearts before they have come into contact with the darker side of our civilisation, non-Christian peoples seem to be able to survive its impact, and to assimilate its material blessings without evil results. Does not this suggest with irresistible force that what gives even Western civilisation its capacity to resist the degenerative influences imbedded within it is the religion which has become interwoven with its life, and is the very breath of its progressive activities? And when we remember that it is a central contention of this religion that it is a superhuman and Divine force let down into human life, a saving truth revealed because without it Man would be powerless to undo the effects of sin, does it not equally suggest that, without some such Divine revelation, the race would never have been able to regain its capacity for effective spiritual development? Both negatively, therefore, and positively, we seem driven to this position, that without a Divine intervention Man would not have been able to undo the effects of the Fall. So much the course of History appears to make plain.

2. The same conclusion is driven home upon us by psychological and moral considerations.

If sin attacked only the outer departments of our moral life, leaving the springs of our spiritual activities uncontaminated, there would be no reason to doubt our power of resistance against it. There would be a hard battle, but the end would be assured. On the contrary, it is a fact to which our innermost consciousness bears the most emphatic testimony, that the seat of moral evil is in *the very will which could alone resist and overcome it.* The springs of motive have been contaminated; the enemy has penetrated the fortress; there is a traitor within. Till the will is renewed, therefore, there can be no recovery; till the fountain has been cleansed it will continue to send forth defiled waters. It would seem to follow that without a visitation from on high, involving a reinforcement of our whole ethical and spiritual nature, it is not possible for us to regain our lost position, and move onward toward the light. Apart from this the spiritual history of humanity must be a series of hard and ineffectual endeavours to expel a trouble that has become a drag on the very energy which alone can do battle with it. And is not this the actual course of human life? Have not the best men confessed to a sense of inability to conquer sin? Do not the sad records of the past echo and re-echo with the cry of the tortured human heart as it feels itself in the grip of an enemy too strong to be overcome? "The question of evil is as old as humanity itself. It enters into all forms of religion. It is the background of mystery in all human life; and its shadow falls ever on that outward world of cosmical law which seems most removed from it."[1] In all lands, philosophies, and creeds, it is the one fact that refuses to be classified, the

[1] "The Christian Doctrine of Sin," by Princ. Tulloch, p. 29.

residuum of darkness which no light can pierce, the one burden that no comforting thought can overcome, no soaring hope outfly. It is absolutely certain that, if Christ has no message of release for the race, there is no other direction to which we may look with confidence for emancipation from the dominance of evil. We lose ourselves in frothy generalities about progress, and vague dreams about social regeneration, which leave the springs of motive without reinforcement, and do little or nothing to quicken the individual soul to newness of life.

3. There is one other consideration that bears in the same direction. The renewal of life can only come from the source of life. Unless God, who has lit the spark of our spiritual nature, and in whom we all live and move and have our being, gives us fresh stores of spiritual vitality, the disease that afflicts us can never be expelled. But, it may well be asked, has not that door of hope been left open from the beginning? Is it not a part of the original conditions of our being that, by aspiration and prayer, men should be able to come into fresh and vitalising contact with the Father of lights? This is unquestionably so. Whatever barrier we may have raised between the soul and its source, that barrier has never hindered the free flow of Divine love and grace towards all His creatures; He has ever been willing to receive the prodigal back, and restore him to filial communion. What need then is there that there should be a Divine interposition in order to bring about a result already provided for in the normal course of spiritual law? This, that the barrier is irremovable from our side. Sin has intrenched itself in the universe; it has fatally vitiated the relations that ought to exist between God and Man; and unless something is done of a special character by the Former to remedy the abnormal course into which human life has fallen, we

on our side, for reasons already given, can do nothing effectual to set matters right.[1]

The need for a special revelation of God to Man being thus demonstrated, the next question is, In what manner may we expect this to have been made?

II

THERE are several conceivable ways in which a race of creatures spiritually fallen might be restored.

1. Perhaps we may begin further back. *The old race might have been swept away*, and a fresh start be made from the very beginning. There is, however, only one hypothesis on which such a plan would have been admissible. It is that sin should have taken such irremovable hold on the old humanity that it had lost all capacity for renewal. That this has actually happened with whole communities is certain. Just as races have been physically swept away through the ravages of virulent epidemics, or so weakened in vitality and self-protective energy that they have succumbed to other foes,[2] so has an epidemic of sinful habit fatally sapped the physical as well as moral life of certain

[1] The fact that in almost all countries there have appeared choice souls who seem to have lived in close communion with God, and been the *media* of real though imperfect revelations of His Nature and Will, does not vitiate this argument. It only shows that where the barrier on our side is thinnest, the light which shines on the other side burns through, and gives us authentic, though vague, indications of the goodness and grace which ever seek entrance into human hearts and lives.

[2] For instance, it is well known that a severe epidemic of small-pox so decimated the Indian tribes whose territories bordered on the Plymouth settlement of the Puritans of New England, that they were utterly unable to withstand their attacks, and whole tribes gradually melted away before the advancing civilisation of the white man. This visitation was put down by the Puritans to a Divine interposition in their behalf

peoples, so that they were finally exterminated by the ravages of disease and the attacks of stronger and less depraved races. Nor is there anything inherently unreasonable in the idea of a Providential order that should make use of physical agencies for moral and spiritual ends as a means of cleansing the world of such centres of pollution, as the old legend tells us was the case with Sodom and Gomorrah,[1] where there were not even enough good men to furnish the necessary leaven of moral vitality to permit a gleam of hope for the future. But as applied to the whole race of humanity this hypothesis is inadmissible on two grounds. It would, in the first place, be an utter confession of failure on the part of the Creator. In the second place, it would necessitate the creation of a fresh race of creatures by Divine *fiat*, which we know to be inconsistent with His Evolutionary methods of work.

2. A second conceivable method would have been *to force the fallen race* into the paths of moral rectitude, and so undo the mischief that had taken place. But a little consideration will show that this plan, though it often appears to suggest itself to the minds of immature thinkers, would also involve an impossibility still more inadmissible. By no possible method can a moral creature be made good and pure by force. Goodness is "self-elected virtue"; it is something that must be voluntarily chosen; necessitated goodness is a contradiction in terms. A Creator desiring to crown His creative work with a race of moral beings *must*, in the very conditions of the case, give them freedom to choose between moral alternatives; and however He may be at liberty to persuade and attract His creatures into the paths of holiness by all kinds of legitimate inducements, there must ever be left to them an opportunity

[1] Gen. xix. 12, 13: cf. xviii. 23-33.

of effective refusal. A race "gone out of the way" therefore can never be brought back to the right path by force, be that force physical or moral; it can only be *drawn* back by inducements which, however strong and beautiful they may be, still leave the way open to a persistent choice of lower alternatives.

3. Working within this limit, there are still several alternatives that seem to have been open. *The method of destruction might,* for instance, *be combined with that of preservation.* The hopelessly bad might be swept away directly they lost the power to respond to higher appeals, leaving room for those who were still within reach of response to such appeals to recover lost ground and continue the race. This is the method which the Jehovist writer in Genesis believed to have been followed. He seems haunted by the exceeding corruptness of human nature, and explains the legendary accounts of prehistoric catastrophes that had come down as Divine visitations on sin. Miss Julia Wedgwood, indeed, in her brilliant work on the "Message of Israel" endeavours to make out that the Jehovist narratives represent the Divine Being as continually interfering with His own work because of its imperfection, and trying to make up for His mistakes by alternately renewing and spoiling His handiwork. Taking the anthropomorphic language of the writer in its literal sense, she says: "He repents that He has called into existence a race incurably divergent from His ideal;[1] He aims at destroying them, and then illogically arranges for their perpetuation.[2] He is a weak, impetuous, changeable monarch, less what we mean by God than many an imperfect man."[3] This is

[1] Gen. vi. 5-7.
[2] Gen. vi. 13-21.
[3] "Message of Israel," pp. 81, 82.

plausible, but thoroughly misleading. Making due allowance for the markedly anthropomorphic manner in which this writer everywhere pictures forth the Divine Being, his purpose is rather to show how Man's sin has necessitated successive interferences with the course of human history, than to express the idea of a vital miscarriage of purpose. This gifted authoress comes nearer the mark when she says: "The expulsion of Adam from Paradise, of Cain from Eden, of the Angels from heaven, and finally the obliteration of all but a single family from earth, must be regarded as in each case a vivid expression of what we may almost call perplexity at the marvel which we touch on in the name of sin."[1] But even this does not fully state the case. The Jehovist is really putting before us a two-sided conception of sin: first, its utterly demoralising effects on Man, necessitating a thorough spiritual sanitation of the world at critical intervals; and secondly, the persistence with which God works for the future progress of humanity, not only by this process of destroying the hopelessly bad, but by carefully preserving such as are still capable of carrying on the moral evolution of the race. It is the beginning of the "Story of the Remnant" of which Seth, Enoch, Noah, are the prehistoric channels; and Abraham, with his descendants, the Chosen Race, the later developments on the plains of recorded history. The hopelessly sinful Many are destroyed, in order that the faithful Few may be preserved; and these Few are preserved in order that finally the whole race of Mankind may be blessed and redeemed.[2]

This principle of specialisation or "sifting" is the key to all the narratives of Genesis, and more or

[1] "The Message of Israel," p. 128.
[2] Gen. xii. 3.

less those of the whole Old Testament. We first have the genealogy of Seth separated out from that of Cain;[1] then the family of Noah from the evil generation amongst which it lived;[2] ten generations later the Call of Abraham takes place,[3] and the way is prepared for the growth of a nation which is consecrated to the saving purpose of God. But this does not complete the cycle of separations. The tendency towards degeneration reappears again and again. In the next generation but one, we find Jacob chosen as the representative of the same purpose, and Esau is rejected;[4] and though this was the last case in which the selection was purely genealogical, the process still goes on. The Chosen Race is again and again sifted; the evil elements are winnowed out; as the family multiplies into a nation, it is made to undergo a constant discipline of character and ideal. The long slavery in Egypt, continued for 400 years; the trying vicissitudes of the wilderness wanderings; the fierce struggle for the possession of the land of Canaan; the varied and perpetual moral lapses and recoveries of the times of the Judges, leading through the stages of a more or less pure theocracy into that of a theocratic monarchy,—all are a series of disciplinary processes with a distinctively spiritual end in view. At this point a fresh selection takes place; the splitting of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel results in the rejection, and finally the scattering, of the latter among the heathen nations, while the former is destined to become the ultimate channel of redeeming grace, after which the discipline again becomes educative and spiritual. Without descending into detail, the whole history of the people clearly illustrates a continuous principle of

[1] Gen. v. 3.
[2] Gen. vi. 8.
[3] Gen. xii. 3.
[4] Gen. xxviii. 14.

moral sifting: the unfit are dispersed and rejected; the fit alone survive, and carry on the Divine purpose to its consummation. "And God divided the light from the darkness," the waters above the firmament from those below, the dry land from the seas[1]—this earliest creative process is continued throughout all generations in the region of character, till we come to its consummation in the arrival of Jesus Christ in the flesh.[2]

4. But even this does not put the whole case before us. God's method of redeeming the fallen Race of Man involved something higher than a process of Education. It was also *a Revealing process.* You cannot by education develop anything which is not already implicit in the soul. The Divine purpose for Man included an uplifting towards Himself, and so it was necessary that His own nature should be made known by means which Man could never have attained through any natural development. And in the Old Testament we have the history of a Divine Revelation, interwoven with the history of a Moral Discipline. There is a shining of light from above, as well as a purifying of vision from beneath. Primitive ideas of God are unified, clarified, raised to a higher plane, and supplemented by direct communications from the Unseen. This process, like the other, is very gradual, and proceeds *pari passu* with it. It is a superhuman process throughout, but it follows all the laws of an evolutionary growth. At first, it is germinal, inchoate, undefined,

[1] Gen. i. 4, 7, 9.

[2] "The ultimate outcome of Israel's long discipline manifests the reality of that continual and delicate Divine pressure which lifted a rude and barbarous tribe above its surroundings and raised it to the throne of spiritual influence, in reference to which Athanasius declares that Israel was 'a sacred school of the knowledge of God and of the spiritual life for the whole world' (De Incarn., c. xii.)" ("Aspects of the Old Testament," Ottley, pp. 58, 59).

and mingled with all manner of extraneous and inconsistent elements; but slowly the earthy element is winnowed out, the spiritual becomes more pronounced and pure, and at last Israel is in possession of a Monotheism which serves as a mould for the final revelation of the Divine nature in the New Testament.

5. And here we come within sight of the crowning element in the redeeming process. The Old Testament is, throughout, the history of *a process of Incarnation.* It is the story of a Hope, and of the gradual realisation of that Hope in humanity. Whatever may have been the exact import at different times of this Messianic Hope to the people of Israel, it is clear that they were from the first battling with an Idea too big for their comprehension, and one destined to be fulfilled in a manner far exceeding their highest conceptions. It is only in the light of the sequel that we can read the meaning of the early intimations of a Deliverer that ever hovered before their imperfect spiritual vision. The Cradle as well as the Cross throws a searchlight across the centuries, and gives significance and clearness to much that otherwise would be dark and meaningless. The discipline of Israel becomes a deeper and more sacred process to our eyes when we realise that it was a preparation for the incoming of God Himself into Humanity, and the necessary rudeness of the means—being governed by the historic conditions—is hallowed in view of the loftiness of the end. The presence of the supernatural in the Old Testament histories—though we may freely allow legitimate criticism to deal with the records, and to sift fact from legend—gains a new credibility in the face of the stupendous miracle to which they all lead as their consummation and fruit. The intermingling of the human and the Divine elements in the ancient revelation becomes more comprehensible

to us in view of that supreme fact of History—the Person of Jesus Christ—in whom we have the perfect embodiment of the Divine under the essential limitations of humanity.[1] The whole Old Testament glows with a new light when we realise, as Wellhausen puts it, that the religion it records "did not so much make men partakers in a Divine life, as make God a partaker in the life of men."[2] With reverence we may say that it tells us of the gradual attempts of the Divine to enter into and make its home with the human. The entrance was barred by many obstacles, and guarded by the flashing swords of many fiery passions and implacable repugnances. If at last it was opened that the "King of glory might come in," this was due to no willinghood at the start, but to the infinite patience and grace of the Most High. The birth of Christ heralds the moment of victory in a battle which had lasted from the beginning of time. "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ"[3]—this is the final ridge of the slow process, the dawnings of which vanish in the misty uplands of an immeasurable past.

[1] On this point Ottley is suggestive and helpful:—"In the light of God's actual dealings with the world in the gift of His Son, we can appreciate better all that recent research has taught us respecting the close affinity between Israel's early faith and practice, and that of its heathen neighbours and kinsfolk. It no longer startles us to find Divine wisdom adopting, regulating, and consecrating to higher uses traditional customs or practices common to the entire Semitic race, in order to employ them as elements in a system of rudimentary instruction and graduated moral discipline. We cannot be surprised even to find that very low and inadequate conceptions of the Godhead are accepted as the necessary basis of higher and more spiritual ideas" ("Aspects of the Old Testament," p. 14).

[2] "Sketch of the History of the People of Israel," p. 17.

[3] 1 John v. 20.

III

THIS then was God's method of Recovery for the Race lying under the bafflement and defeat of Sin. He undid that evil work, and restarted the life of humanity in the line of its ideal by sending forth His Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh." [1]

By this means three essential results were achieved.

First, "He condemned sin in the flesh." [2] The evil power that had so marred and hindered the true development of the soul was revealed in its dreadful reality in the light of the age-long difficulty which it presented to the manifestation of the Divine nature in the mould of humanity, and still more in the perfect beauty and holiness of that human life in which the Divine glory was revealed.[3] This condemnation was further driven home in the sacrifice of the Cross, which was the consummation of all the sacrificial types and symbols of the Jewish Law—the reality of which they were the imperfect shadow. Without this complete and perfect revelation of the true nature of Sin, it could not be clothed with that repugnance and loathing without which it can never be overcome and destroyed. And it must be condemned "in the flesh"; that is, in the very human nature in which its destroying forces had been seen and experienced. Were all the forces of the universe voiced into thunders, they would not have availed so perfectly to condemn sin as that quiet life of holiness, and that awful act of self-sacrifice, which were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Divine "Son of Man."

Secondly, the Incarnation showed the possibilities of human nature when voluntarily and perfectly delivered into the hands of God. Simply to condemn and judge

[1] Rom. viii. 3. [2] *Ibid.* [3] John i. 14.

sin would not have been a real redemption. It would have brought Man to despair, not to salvation; to self-loathing, not to self-respect. Men must be taught to honour their own nature, to believe in its high possibilities, ere they can make adequate efforts after reformation. Self-respect is one of the conditions of moral endeavour. And the Incarnation, by showing that even sin has not quite destroyed the image of God in the soul, gave a great impulse to every aspiration in the human heart. Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh"; He came in our marred and broken nature. This proves the capacity of that nature, even in its fallen condition, to entertain, nay, to embody the Eternal, and it fills the weakest and the sinfullest with hope for himself under the grace of God. The reign of Sin is not a hopeless tyranny; it is an incubus that may be thrown off, an evil dream out of which the worst man may awake, and so "come to himself" and to God.

Thirdly, the Incarnation proves the immeasurable interest of our Maker in us, and His willingness to put Divine resources at our disposal for a new and holy life. It is the crowning seal of His love and grace. Sin had interfered with our natural growth in goodness; God has interfered again, and by a gift of matchless love has brought us back where we may once more set out on our forsaken pathway. We could not have done this of ourselves, but "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."[1] "Wherefore if any man is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature: the old things are passed

[1] Rom. viii. 3, 4.

away; behold, they are become new."[1] The past is blotted out; the present is free; the future is radiant with possibilities, and beautiful with hopes.

The line of thought we have pursued in this chapter, while it bears witness to the personal "interference" of God in the history of redemption (viewed from the lower side of physical law), also illustrates the evolutionary method pursued in His dealings with the Fallen Race. The Redemptive process, belonging as it does to the kingdom of personal relations, would in the nature of things involve what must appear arbitrary and unrelated to the biologist and the physicist. Therefore those whose science proceeds on the ground that everything in the higher orders of life must be explained in terms of the lower, will find here much that is perplexing. Their perpetual peril will be to minimise and even to deny facts, when they cannot be brought within the categories with which alone they are willing to work. That only proves the incompetence of these categories to deal with the facts. Viewed from a freer standpoint, they make room for ampler explanations and more adequate theories. We are brought by these facts within the scope of a Divine order, whose beginning will be a mystery, as every beginning is; but whose method of work may be studied, and whose results may be classified, because, like all the orders of life, it follows the laws of development.

It thus comes to pass that, though a materialistic Evolution can find no place for the fact and process of the Incarnation, we are not for this reason debarred from expounding that mystery from an Evolutionary standpoint. By so doing, we bring the highest facts of religion into line with the rest of human knowledge. It is well

[1] 2 Cor. v. 17

to remember that in no case does science throw light on beginnings. It tells us nothing about how matter, life, mind, self-consciousness came into being. These are the *data*, and the task of science is to tell us how they grew from little to more, and expanded from almost imperceptible beginnings to their consummation. Similarly, science cannot explain to us the prime impulse of the Incarnation ; that is the *datum* of our inquiry ; but it can watch the growth of the process from little to more, till we come to the perfect flower and fruit in Jesus Christ ; which in its turn is a starting-point for a still broader incarnation—the life of the Spirit in sanctified and holy men who believe in His name and are the recipients of His love and grace. Leaping over the intermediate stages of that vague preparation for the coming of the Redeemer which are revealed in the Old Testament, let us now pass on to the study of the Incarnation as it is seen in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

Book II: Evolution and the Incarnation

"This man so cured regards the Curer, then,
As—God forgive me!—who but God Himself,
Creator and Sustainer of the world,
That came and dwelt in flesh on it awhile!
—'Sayeth that such an one was born and lived,
Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his own house,
Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I know,
And yet was . . . . what I said nor choose repeat,
And must have so avouched Himself, in fact,—

* * * * *

The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
So, the All-great, were the All-loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice,
Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, My hands fashioned, see it in Myself!
Thou hast no power, nor canst conceive of Mine,
But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
And thou must love Me who have died for thee!'"

BROWNING.

" This earth too small
For Love Divine? Is God not Infinite?
If so, His Love is Infinite. Too small!
One famished babe meets pity oft from Man
More than an army slain! Too small for Love:
Was earth too small to be of God created?
Why then too small to be redeemed?"

AUBREY DE VERE.

BOOK II

EVOLUTION AND THE INCARNATION

Chapter I.—Some Modern Difficulties

Points of Conflict—"Unknowableness" of God—Can He limit Himself?—Nature a Form of Divine Self-limitation—Degeneration of Man divinely arrested—Ultimate Beneficence of "Waste"—Incarnation a "Geocentric" Idea—Historical and Physiological Objections.

"THE law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."[1] This is St. Paul's statement of the saving work wrought in his soul by his Saviour. Through Him and what He did, the heritage of evil was expunged and eliminated from his nature. "Behold, all things are become new";[2] "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creature in Christ Jesus";[3] "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me."[4] Such are a few of the glowing words in which he describes the profound blessing and deliverance which he realised, in some sense or other, through what Christ had done for him and in him.

What this was and is in the life of believers in Christ it is now our business to inquire.

In the old phraseology, the saving work of Christ was made possible through His Incarnation, Atonement, and Resurrection from the dead. The question we

[1] Rom. viii. 2.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 17.
[3] Gal. vi. 15.
[4] Gal. ii. 20 (R.V. margin).

have to consider here is whether these doctrines have been left behind by the advance of scientific thought, or whether they can be harmonised with the teachings of Evolution.

I

There are several points of seeming or real conflict between the doctrine of the Incarnation and the principles of the Evolutionary philosophy as expounded by some of its foremost exponents.

1. Let us begin with the bearings of the doctrine of the Incarnation on the nature and character of God. It has been assumed by some believers in Evolution that God in Himself is Unknowable, a position which, if true, would make the notion of an Incarnation of the Divine in humanity a contradiction in terms.

But we have already seen that this association of theological nescience with scientific Evolution is purely factitious. There is, according to Mr. Huxley himself, no necessary connection between the two views. To quote a saying of his already referred to, "Evolution has no more to do with Theism than the first book of Euclid."[1] If Mr. Spencer is an avowed Agnostic, it cannot be too clearly understood that it has no more to do with his being an Evolutionist than has his opinion of bimetallism. Since this is so, and our subject is limited in its scope to the immediate and logical bearings of Evolution pure and simple on the fundamental and distinctive doctrines of the Faith, we will not deal here with the arguments that are concerned with the Knowableness of God, but will restrict ourselves to the more relevant aspects of the case.[2]

[1] On this point it is interesting to know that Darwin was of the same opinion. See his "Life and Letters," I. 307, 313; III. 236, 304.

[2] On this point see Iverach's "Is God Knowable?"

2. There is an analogous and somewhat more pertinent form of this objection on which, however, we desire to say a few words. It takes the form of assuming that the Incarnation, being a kind of self-limitation on the part of the Supreme Being, is inconsistent with His essential Godhead, that the union of the Divine and Human natures in one person is absurd, and that the notion cannot be translated into clear thought.

The idea that the Infinite Being is above all change, and so above self-limitation, is not a new one, but it has, for certain reasons that we need not now go into, received a new emphasis since the rise of the Evolutionary Theory. Once however the fact of the existence of God is affirmed, there is clearly no validity in this objection.

For the very existence of the Universe affords evidence of an act of self-limitation on the part of the Creator. The very fact that He works by *Law* and not by *Fiat* is a signal proof of His voluntary submission to definite limitations—limitations which He has ordained for ends that may only be dimly guessed at by us, but which Faith believes could be gained in no other way. And this principle of self-limitation is greatly emphasised by what Evolution tells us of His ways. Thinking of Him loosely as the Omnipotent, we keep constantly asking, "Why does God not do this, that, or the other?" And we are inclined sometimes to rebel against ordinances which seem to us to be by no means essential to the carrying on of the world's events. Before the discovery of the Evolutionary process which is now regarded as *the* process which God has for His own reasons elected to be the working method of Nature, this was a question which could not but rise to men's lips. But now we see far more clearly than before that the Almighty has chosen to work along lines of

limitation that often seem to our eyes arbitrary, and often incomprehensible, but which are at least perfectly consistent and invariable. As Mr. Le Conte says[1]:—

"See then the difference between man's mode of working and Nature's [by which here he means God's]. A man having made a steam-engine, and desiring to use it for a different purpose, . . . will nearly always be compelled to add new parts not contemplated in the original machine. Nature rarely makes new parts—never if she can avoid it—but, on the contrary, adapts an old part to the new function. *It is as if Nature were not free to use any and every device to accomplish her end, but were conditioned by her own plans of structure; as indeed she must be according to the derivation theory.*"[1]

From an entirely different point of view, Mr. Ruskin puts the same thought in language so beautiful and suggestive that we feel that the reader will thank us for quoting the passage *in extenso*:—

"The highest greatness and the highest wisdom" [he says, in dealing with the "Lamp of Truth" in Architecture] "are shown, the first by a noble submission to, the second by a thoughtful providence for, certain voluntarily admitted restraints. Nothing is more evident than this, in that supreme government which is the example, as it is the centre, of all others. The Divine Wisdom is, and can be, shown to us only in its meeting and contending with the difficulties which are voluntarily, and *for the sake of that contest*, admitted by the Divine Omnipotence: and these difficulties, observe, occur in the form of natural laws or ordinances, which might, at many times and in countless ways, be infringed with apparent advantage, but which are never infringed, whatever costly arrangements or adaptations their observance may necessitate for the accomplishment of given purposes. The example most apposite to our present subject is the structure of the

[1] "Evolution and Religious Thought," p. 129. [Italics ours.]

bones of animals. No reason can be given, I believe, why the system of the higher animals should not have been made capable, as that of the *Infusoria* is, of secreting flint, instead of phosphate of lime, or, more naturally still, carbon; so framing the bones of adamant at once. The elephant and rhinoceros, had the earthy part of their bones been made of diamond, might have been made as agile and light as grasshoppers, and other animals might have been framed, far more magnificently colossal than any that walk the earth. In other worlds we may, perhaps, see such creations; a creation for every element, and elements infinite. But the architecture of animals *here* is appointed by God to be a marble architecture, not a flint nor adamant architecture; and all manner of expedients are adopted to attain the utmost degree of strength and size possible under that great limitation. The jaw of the ichthyosaurus is pieced and riveted, the leg of the megatherium is a foot thick, and the head of the myodon has a double skull; we, in our wisdom, should, doubtless, have given the lizard a steel jaw, and the myodon a cast-iron headpiece, and forgotten the great principle to which all creation bears witness, that order and system are nobler things than power. But God shows us in Himself, strange as it may seem, not only authoritative perfection, but even the perfection of Obedience—an obedience to His own laws: and in the cumbrous movement of those unwieldiest of His creatures, we are reminded, even in His divine essence, of that attribute of uprightness in the human creature; 'that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.'"[1]

[1] Ruskin's "Seven Lamps of Architecture," Aphorism 11, pp. 77-80. Cf. the following passage from Frances Power Cobbe's "Dawning Lights": "'Of this,' says Aristotle, 'even God is deprived: to make the past as though it had not been.' He cannot alter the relation of numbers, or make circles and triangles to have the same properties. These are limitations of Omnipotence which all of us admit" (p. 105). The very faithfulness of God to Himself in the maintenance of reasoned order in Creation is thus a form of self-limitation.

This passage has a far wider scope than that for which it was primarily written, and expresses a law in the method of creation which throws light on many of the mysteries of God's ways. Here we have to do with it only in so far as it illustrates the fact that in creation as we see it there is abundant evidence that God obeys a law of self-limitation. He has in a sense abdicated the throne of Omnipotence, and works by *means*; and consistency to the conditions He has laid down for Himself necessitates that in all His dealings with His creatures He should act in a certain way, and not in another way. Since this self-limitation, so far at least as the particular form which it takes, is voluntary, and not fated by any condition outside of the Deity, it does not imply a loss of power absolutely, though it does seem to do so relatively. It only shows why, once the conditions under which the creation is carried on were settled by Divine wisdom, things should be as they are and not otherwise, and makes us sure that in the Redemption of Humanity God would act on lines of definite procedure, in thorough harmony with all that He has implicitly laid down in the plan of creation. And it quite removes any antecedent difficulty we might feel as to the unthinkable nature of such a mystery as the Incarnation. For, in a lower sense, the creation itself is but an Incarnation of the Most High; and it is not more but less difficult to understand that He should incarnate Himself in Humanity than in the material forms of creation; for in Man at least we have a being that must be nearer in nature to God than the insentient rock or the merely sentient brute.

3. But it may with some plausibility be argued that the character of God as seen in the workings of Nature—if we are to take Nature as in any sense a

revelation of character and not merely one of power—is not consistent with the notion that He should incarnate Himself in a special way for the redemption of Man from the power of the evil which has laid hold of him.

The testimony of Nature, as we have seen, is that when once an animal is degraded in the ranks of being through the action of the law of degeneration, there is no remedial process by which it may regain its lost status. Having "gone out of the way" it has henceforth to take its place amongst those lower beings with which it is allied, and can by no possibility return to its own proper position. Why should this rule be put aside in the case of Man? Is there any reason to think that this has been done in his case which is never done in the case of any other earthly being,—or even that it *could* be done, *i.e.* under the conditions?

This again, like a good many ideas that seem to have had their birth in modern ways of thinking, is by no means a recent difficulty. It suggested itself long ago to the Psalmist as he gazed at the glory of the midnight heavens, and thought of the almost infinite littleness of Man as an object to be specially noticed and redeemed by God. "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?"[1] But there is no doubt that there are certain considerations that have tended to make this a more pressing difficulty in the present day than in earlier times; for the discoveries of science have clouded to many minds the vision of the Divine goodness, and indisposed them to receive the message and burden of the Gospel, that

[1] Psalm viii. 3-5.

God is a Being full of mercy and lovingkindness, slow to anger and of great mercy. For the revelation of Science, we are told, is this: that the weakest goes to the wall by the stern law of the survival of the fittest; that there is no provision of pity and kindness for those that are unable to take care of their own interests; and that, in fact, the whole Universe is a vast inquisition-chamber in which there is little but slaughter and agony with intervals of joy and gladness. And though it is easy to exaggerate the element of suffering which undoubtedly exists in the world among all the ranks and races of living things, by introducing an imaginative element into the argument without knowing it, and ascribing to the brute creation our own keen susceptibility to, and anticipation of, pain and anguish, still there is enough validity in this objection, arising as it does out of the sympathetic side of our nature, to make it worth our while to deal with it. For though it be a true difficulty, and will always make a demand on our faith and trust in its contemplation, it is yet by no means so hopeless as many nowadays seem to find it.

Let it be freely granted that the theory of the survival of the fittest, with its tremendous waste of life and its terrible infliction of suffering, has emphasised the difficulty felt of old in this direction. But if so, it has also shed a ray of light on the very darkest spot of the difficulty. For what was the most trying point of the problem? It used to be this—that there did not seem to be any beneficent purpose in this terrible infliction of pain on the brute creation. On the old-fashioned belief that all creative processes came to an end with the birth of Man, no one seemed able to suggest a purpose sufficiently plausible to account for so sad a fact. But with the theory of Descent, while

the mystery was made worse in so far that a clearer vision is obtained of the amount and possibly of the intensity of suffering in the world, while we were appalled to think of the seemingly cruel waste of life that stains the onward march of the generations, at the same time (and for the first time in the history of Science) a clear line of purpose is seen to run along the line of suffering. For it has been shown as an essential part of the theory in question that the "waste" of life leads to a beneficent end. It has had the result of conserving and improving life itself. It has led to the introduction of higher forms of life. It is the blood-stained pathway making possible that upward march which has reached to Man's coming into the world. And so we now see that the infliction of suffering was by no means without purpose or result. In the very phrase "the survival of the fittest" we have a glimpse of the beneficent end towards which this dreadful "groaning and travailing of the creation until now" was all the while tending. So we are at least indebted to physical Science for removing one of the most serious stumbling-blocks in the path of faith, by showing that the most perplexing fact in Nature is one of the conditions by means of which God has been leading His creation upward and onward towards its high goal and destiny.[1]

[1] "This 'survival of the fittest' is what Darwin termed 'natural selection,' because it leads to the same results in nature as are produced by man's selection among domestic animals and cultivated plants. Its primary effect will, clearly, be to keep each species in the most perfect health and vigour, with every part of its organisation in full harmony with the conditions of its existence. It prevents any possible deterioration in the organic world, and produces that appearance of exuberant life and enjoyment, of health and beauty, that affords us so much pleasure, and which might lead a superficial observer to suppose that peace and quietude reigned throughout nature" (Wallace's "Darwinism," p. 103).

The same line of thought will greatly help us to understand why a new departure has been taken by God in His treatment of Fallen Man as compared with His treatment of the lower creatures who have degenerated into a lower plane of existence. Because Man is the ideal end towards which the lower creation has been moving—an end which had no sooner been reached than it was disturbed and threatened with ruin through sin—there is nothing incongruous in the idea that God should, in order to bring things back to their true line of development, incarnate Himself in a new and higher sense in a human person, and so destroy the power of evil and open up the way to a still higher Evolution of character. Once grant the fact that God had a purpose in creation, and that this purpose was to lead to Man as its earthly fulfilment, we are bound, if we believe in God at all, to believe that He would not allow it to be all lost by Man's transgression, without doing what He could—apart from interfering with Man's freewill—to redeem him from its shame and tyranny, so that the interrupted course of His purpose might be resumed.

This is exactly what the Christian Theology represents as God's end in the Incarnation and Resurrection. It is, in a sense, a Divinely spontaneous scheme for the re-habilitation of the Fallen Creation—for in the Fall of Man the whole Creation fell, since all its upward strivings were thereby for the time made of no avail. It was in another sense the Divine answer to the prayer of Fallen Humanity for help to rise again—for evil, though it had stunted and threatened to kill all good in Man, had not quite done so. Still the redemption must come in the first instance from God ; for Man had lost the power to rise independently of God's assistance ; indeed, since his lapse into sin he had largely lost the consciousness of the Divine presence through which alone he

could further develop. Redemption, in other words, could no longer come primarily through the ascent of Man to God, but *mediately*, through the descent of God to Man. And so there is in Hebrew prophecy, and in the strain of sacred bard and poet, an earnest expectation of Some One to come, who should be a starting-point of a new life in God—an expectation fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ.

II

We must consider another difficulty which has been raised on the question of the Incarnation—not that it is really a formidable one, but it has been brought forward several times recently by representative men of Science, and must therefore be one that is really felt by them as a barrier to the acceptance of the Christian position.

This has to do, strange to say, with a discovery which is by no means a recent one, but which has been the occasion of suggesting it, so far as we are aware, only in very recent times. One would think that the bearings of the Copernican system of Astronomy must have long since been realised in their entirety, at least in so far as they relate to Theology. But this does not seem to have been the case, if we are to judge from many utterances on the subject from recent scientific thinkers. They assume that Christian theology is *absolutely*—as we may freely allow, because of the historical conditions of the case, it was *incidentally*—based on an essentially geocentric system of thought, and cannot for that reason be any longer accepted. So long as the earth was believed to be the centre of creation, it was reasonable enough to imagine that even for the outcast race of men God should live a human life and die a human death.

But since it has been discovered that, so far from being the centre of creation, it is but a very small and insignificant planet, it is not reasonable—we are told—to suppose that the Eternal should leave His courses among the stars and incarnate Himself in a human body for the purpose of rescuing that race from perdition. Such an idea savours of that self-important and exalted notion of himself that Man has ever been too prone to form.[1]

In facing this difficulty it is, to begin with, by no means true that Science has interfered with Man's notion of his supreme position in the order of creation. We have already shown that Science has clarified this sense of self-importance by defining its nature and limits more exactly; establishing it on a basis of scientific certainty, instead of a ground of empirical observation or of sentimental feeling. There is therefore no reason for Man to feel any fresh access of modesty in considering his relationship with the creation generally, nor to find any new difficulty of a religious kind in that direction.

It is clear that there must be some other reason for

[1] It is startling to find in Dr. Pfleiderer's "Gifford Lectures" for 1894 the following statement of the same fact. Speaking of the "new scholasticism" consequent on the return of Protestant theology after the Renaissance to the "old Dogmas," he says: "Yet these partially retrograde currents could not keep back the new advance of non-theological secular science which had proceeded from the impetus of the Renaissance. While the theologians were still busily employed in the Churches in restoring the old dogmas which had been built up on the basis of the Ptolemaic cosmology, and which fitted only into its framework, this cosmology was destroyed by Copernicus and supplemented by the new view of the world which stands in utter contradiction to the whole of the system of the ecclesiastical dogmatics, from the creation to the coming of Christ and His Return again, as was clearly recognised by Melancthon much more acutely than by all his later followers" ("Philosophy and Development of Religion," by Otto Pfleiderer, D.D., being the Gifford Lectures" for 1894, Vol. I., p. 76).

rejecting the Christian conception of God, before such a point could be raised at all. The objection would apply only to the notion of a Deity who was devoid of all the finest and highest attributes that are ascribed to Him in the Bible. Especially irrelevant are such objections in view of the revelation of the character of God the Father in the parables of our Lord Jesus Christ. To any one who believes the teaching enshrined in these glowing idylls of Divine love and goodness, the notion that the mere place of residence of a race would be a consideration in the mind of God in determining or hindering His saving purpose towards them seems inexpressibly paltry. It is certainly entirely at variance with the teachings of Him who said that His purpose was, not to save the high and the mighty only, but also the outcast and the despised; and who left the palaces for the streets of Jerusalem, and consorted with publicans and sinners—not because He was one of themselves, but because He wished to show them that they were of equal value to the heart of God as were those clothed in fine raiment, and who fared sumptuously every day. Take the parable of the Lost Sheep, and consider for a moment what it teaches us, by suggestion, of the character of God. If this parable is true, it must mean that God regards His creatures, not from the standpoint of the inherent or attained nobility of their nature, but from their moral standing and their need of Himself. It must mean that if all the countless suns which had from the beginning of time kindled their fires at the central glory were all bright and glorious still, and that but one small satellite had broken loose from its celestial moorings, and was plunging into wastes of eternal death, then God would, so to speak, leave all, that He might bring back the wandering planet to its allegiance. It must mean that though every other star

were peopled with bright beings who had never sinned and so had never suffered, and that on this little earth alone a rebel race existed, the great Heart to whose throbs the Universe keeps in tune would never rest till it had done all that Divine love could do to bring that race back to Himself. It must mean that though every star in the sky were peopled with sinful creatures, Christ the Son would make Himself poor for their sakes, would become Man, would suffer and die, *in every one of them*, rather than permit one of these creatures to perish for want of a Saviour. It is not the astronomical position of a world that measures God's care for it—if the teaching of Jesus is true; and it is not the moral perfection, but the possibilities of moral perfection in a race, that makes Him willing to suffer for it. Has a planet wandered? Has a soul fallen? Are there in the farthest corner of His creation beings that need salvation? Then God is there, if the Gospel of Jesus is true, as though He were nowhere else; His love and pity are concentrated from the four quarters of the sky in one burning focus on that sin-darkened spot. The heart of God is where want and weakness are, and sorrow and shame that cry for deliverance and pardon, and dying creatures that hold up hands of appeal for pity and help. God is where Love is, and Love is where her help is most sorely needed.

III

THERE is one other difficulty that remains to be considered—to many the most serious difficulty of all—in the way of accepting the fact of the Incarnation. This refers to the historical form in which that supreme event took place. From the earliest Christian times it has been held that the ordinary laws of generation

were partially suspended in the coming of Jesus Christ into the world, and that He was born of a virgin mother. This belief, which has prevailed unbrokenly among Christian thinkers through the generations, constitutes so serious a break in the sequence of history, and in the vital series, that it is an insurmountable barrier in the path of many religious Evolutionists to the acceptance of the fact. It would be well for us, however, to remember that the difficulty did not emerge for the first time with the prevalence of the Evolutionary Theory, but has been inherited from the times of the German Rationalists, who found in this miracle, even more than in others, a barrier to belief in Christianity. But the objections raised by these older thinkers are still felt, and to the historical is added the physiological objection. Let us briefly glance at these in order.

1. The narratives in Matthew and Luke[1] which tell of the Virgin Birth of the Saviour present problems peculiarly intricate and difficult of solution, so much so indeed that some writers, such as Schleiermacher and Keim, who have found it impossible to set aside the authenticity of many of the later miracles owing to the force of the evidence in their favour, found themselves constrained to reject these narratives as statements of fact. The chief difficulties may be summarised in this way: only two of the Gospels contain any reference whatever to the Virgin Birth, and there is no other unequivocal reference to the event in the whole of the New Testament; these two narratives are inconsistent with each other; they are flatly contradicted by the pedigrees which are associated with them;[2] the event is interwoven with elements of the marvellous which inevitably suggest a mythical origin;

[1] Matt. i. 18—ii. 23; Luke i. 1—ii. 40.

[2] The clause in Luke iii. 23, "as was supposed," must on this

the alleged Massacre of the Innocents detailed by Matthew is most improbable, contemporary writers being quite silent on the subject; the story, in Matthew at least, is apparently the result of a desire to give prophecy a literal fulfilment; and it is unnecessary to a firm belief in the essential reality of the Incarnation.

Some of these objections vanish with a little careful examination. On any reasonable view of Inspiration, it is not necessary that parallel accounts of the same event should square in every detail in order to substantiate the central fact. Granted that it is not possible to make the two accounts of the event in question harmonise in certain points, the discrepancies are not incompatible with substantial historicity. They are clearly drawn from diverse and independent sources. It is probable that the original writer of each version was ignorant of the existence of the other version. That in Matthew is not improbably incorporated from a document representing Joseph's testimony to the fact;[1] that in Luke from a document or an oral tradition derived in the first instance from Mary herself. Each gave a personal, but by no means complete, account of the incident; and each account must be supplemented by the other in order to obtain a full and circumstantial statement. The objection, therefore, that Matthew seems to know nothing of the fact that Joseph and Mary had been living at Nazareth before going to Bethlehem, and that Luke is quite oblivious of the Massacre and

theory be considered an interpolation by some harmonising scribe. It is significant, however, that Meyer, who seems to reject the historicity of the Virgin Birth, says with regard to the various readings of this verse, that they are "not so well attested as to warrant a departure from the Received Text," so that the words must be considered a genuine part of Luke's narrative.

[1] Gore's "Dissertations on Subjects Connected with the Incarnation," p. 28.

the Flight, is therefore of little value.[1] As to the genealogies, they may well have been survivals of the time before the Virgin Birth was known to any but the few who were aware of it from the first. Keim's remark that "they could only have been devised by their original authors in the belief that Jesus was Joseph's son" may have been true, but when he goes on to say that this suffices in itself to discredit the story of the Miraculous Conception, and that the narratives "could be watered down by the later compilers to the notion of a sonship from Mary alone, and fostersonship to Joseph, only by doing the most palpable violence not only to the essential form of Jewish pedigree which is dependent on the names of men, but the still more fundamental thought which underlies documents valueless except they demonstrate a blood-relationship to the father,"[2] he is met by the simple fact that these final compilers clearly felt no such incompatibility with Jewish usage, otherwise they could never have allowed the pedigrees to stand as a living contradiction to that theory of the true Virgin Birth of our Lord which they were recording. As to the angel appearances, it may be said that if they present an insuperable difficulty to any one, he is at liberty to account for them as an imaginative materialisation of what may have been in reality but inward communications, and this without in any way destroying the reality of the historical foundation. "The truth of the inward intimation was, on the hypothesis, proved by the subsequent facts: its form was recorded as it presented itself to the subject."[3] Considering, however, the place taken

[1] Gore, "Dissertations," p. 37.
[2] "Jesus of Nazara," II. p. 41.
[3] Gore, "Dissertations," p. 23, whose treatment of this point should be carefully pondered by those who feel the difficulty.

by these angelic appearances in the subsequent Gospel narrative,[1] and the character of the references made by our Lord Himself to the ministry of angels,[2] there are probably few who will find it necessary to take refuge in this theory of subjective visions as the only credible explanation of the facts. The fact that no other reference is made in contemporary history to the Massacre of the Innocents as recorded by Matthew is of little significance, in view of the very scattered and fragmentary character of the national annals of the times; and the story at least chimes in most harmoniously with the known reputation of Herod for boundless cruelty, and for that unreasoning jealousy which characterised him of rival claimants, real or supposed, to the throne which he so insecurely held.

The affirmation confidently made by Keim and others that the New Testament contains no other reference to the stupendous fact of the Virgin Birth than these in the early narratives of Matthew and Luke, deserves a little more careful treatment. That the earliest form of the oral, and possibly that of the written, Gospel were quite silent on the matter, is highly probable; it may be said without exaggeration that the references to the parentage of Joseph prove incontestably that our Lord's closest friends believed during his lifetime that he was His real father.[3] This fact, however, only shows that the miraculous birth was not made known during our Lord's

[1] Matt. iv. 11, xxvi. 53; Luke xxii. 43; John i. 51.

[2] Matt. xiii. 39, xvi. 27, xviii. 10, xxiv. 31, xxv. 31, etc.

[3] Matt. xiii. 55; Luke iv. 22. Gore's inference ("Dissert.," p. 7), from the fact that Mark in the corresponding passage suppresses the reference to Joseph, that the Petrine Evangelist "showed an unwillingness to suggest—even in the surprised questioning of the Jews—the proper parentage of Joseph," seems to us forced and unreal. This difference is surely fully accounted for when we remember the terse and laconic style of this Evangelist as compared with that of the others. See Mark vi. 2, 3. The same

lifetime by those acquainted with its occurrence. Is this a matter for surprise? The event took place away from home and among strangers; the few who were made aware of it through the portents accompanying the birth were soon scattered far and wide, and the two most nearly concerned had good reason to keep the matter quiet, in their little one's interests as well as their own. When we consider the kind of comment which would have been made by social opinion, if the fact had been prematurely divulged, we need not be perplexed at the continued and very natural reticence of Joseph and Mary. Even when, long afterwards, the fact began to be preached abroad, it led to coarse and shameful slander, lasting even into the second century.[1] It was not till after the Exaltation of our Lord that the proper atmosphere for the acceptance of the mystery had penetrated even the Christian Church; and what we know of the modest and retiring character of the Virgin makes it certain that she would have shrunk from making any premature reference to the fact till the right time for its divulgence had clearly arrived.[2] It was a part of the Divine plan that the Deity of Jesus should be discovered to the world, and even to the Church, by the gradual unfolding of His personality and saving power, and not by merely outward signs. What first impressed the disciples was

impression is borne out by the many passages in which the astonishment of the multitude is expressed at our Lord's teaching, and by the disciples at His miracles, which could hardly have been felt if His Divine parentage had been suspected.

[1] See references in Gore's "Dissertations," pp. 6, 7 (footnote).

[2] A comparison between the two narratives of the Nativity makes it clear that the Virgin had shrunk from even acquainting Joseph with her condition—unless indeed we infer from Matt. i. 18, 19, that a fresh revelation of the fact was necessary to force conviction even into the mind of so good a man as Joseph. In this case it was still more natural that the Virgin should have kept the mystery from others. These considerations dispose effectually of Keim's remarks (II. 72), and of Meyer's comments (Mark, Luke; II. 293).

the reality and beauty of His Humanity ;[1] His unique relation to the Father only dawned on the closest of His friends towards the end of His ministry,[2] and even then He charged them to "tell no man that thing."[3] During all these years Mary would keep her precious secret hidden in her heart ; and not till she was sure of reverential credence would she entrust so Divine a fact into the safe-keeping of the infant Church.

But the assertion of ignorance on the part of John and Paul is really a begging of the whole question. The fourth Evangelist, it is almost certain, had the other Gospels before him when he wrote his own ; it was not in his programme to dwell on incidents already fully developed in the earlier accounts ; he built on their foundation ; and there is not a word in his Gospel out of harmony with the alleged fact, but on the contrary much that supplements it, and gives the story an air of reality which, apart from his treatment of the Incarnation, would have made it very difficult of credence. They deal with the event *sub specie temporis* ; he, *sub specie aeternitatis* ; and the two aspects correspond each to the other as body and soul. The same remarks apply with a difference to the Pauline teaching. Paul's Epistles contain distinct allusions to the prior existence of the Saviour,[4] and these allusions are entirely con-

[1] Cf. Fairbairn, "Christ in Modern Theology," p. 354: "But what to the Evangelists did incarnation mean? It meant the coming to be not of a Godhead, but of a manhood. Its specific result was a human, not a Divine, person, whose humanity was all the more real that it was voluntary or spontaneous, all the more natural that God rather than man had to do with its making. To the Evangelists the most miraculous thing in Christ was His determination not to be miraculous, but to live our ordinary life amidst struggles and in the face of temptations that never ceased (Luke iv. 3, xxii. 28)."

[2] Matt. xiv. 33, xvi. 16.

[3] Luke ix. 21.

[4] 1 Cor. xv. 47 ; Phil. ii. 6. So the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews: see i. 2.

sistent with the hypothesis that he was as clearly acquainted with the Virgin Birth as he certainly was with that body of Evangelic narrative which, unquestionably, is ever in the background of his teaching, but to which he makes no distinct and unmistakable reference. Further, his doctrine of the Second Adam, "the Lord from heaven,"[1] postulates His humanity as a new creative act of God, parallel with the creation of the First Adam, and marking a spiritual start for the race.[2] The argument from silence, always tricky and unstable, is in this case specially discounted by the fact that the apostle was writing to those who had been well grounded in the facts and teaching of the Gospel, so that it was quite needless to remind them of what had been thoroughly known to them "from the beginning."

2. Behind the historical comes the physiological problem. That in one and in only one instance in human history the ordinary laws of generation should have been suspended makes a difficulty which, as has already been hinted, is apt to press with peculiar emphasis on the minds in the present age, filled as it is with the sense of the invariable order of Nature, and of the impossibility of imagining such an event as the Virgin Birth. Here, if anywhere, the word "miracle" is apt to spell "monster," for it is apparently out of line with the unchangeable laws through which the Creator works. However, therefore, we may dispose of objections to the historicity of the narrative, and solve the problems which it unquestionably contains for the expositor, we are confronted with this prior and still more stubborn difficulty in the physical sphere. It is probable that the weight of this difficulty accounts for not a few of the alleged historical objections drawn from the character of the

[1] See Gore, *l.c.*, p. 11 [2] 1 Cor. xv. 45-49; Rom. v. 15-21.

narrative, or at least for the pressure which these have exerted over many minds.

In dealing with this aspect of the question, it is well to point out that the laws of biology do *not* preclude such an occurrence as this under consideration, in the emphatic way which has been taken for granted. The deeper the laws of life are studied, and their infinite complexity and instability are borne in mind, the less reason is there to look at this event as absolutely impossible even from a physiological point of view. The mysterious fact of *parthenogenesis* is widespread in the lower orders of Nature, where it is characteristic of whole orders of creatures, while it occurs in other orders occasionally and sporadically; and it is a somewhat startling commentary on the scorn which some scientists have poured on this story, to find so eminent a biological authority as Prof. G. J. Romanes, at a period in his life when he would probably have classed himself among reverent Agnostics rather than among devout believers, affirming that such an occurrence, even in the human race, would be by no means out of the range of possibility.[1] To those who find in the physiological question a final barrier to the acceptance of the Virgin Birth, this testimony will possibly be welcome. It is doubtful,

[1] "Darwin and After Darwin," p. 119 (footnote). "It has been already stated that both parthenogenesis and gemmation are ultimately derived from sexual reproduction. It may now be added, on the other hand, that the earlier stages of parthenogenesis have been observed to occur sporadically in all sub-kingdoms of the Metazoa, including the Vertebrata, and even the highest class, the Mammalia. These earlier stages consist in spontaneous segmentations of the ovum; so that even if a virgin has ever conceived and borne a son, and even if such a fact in the human species has been unique, still it would not betoken any breach of physiological continuity. Indeed, according to Weismann's not improbable hypothesis touching the meaning of polar bodies, such a fact need betoken nothing more than a slight disturbance of the complex machinery of ovulation, on account of which the ovum failed to eliminate from its substance an almost inconceivably minute portion of its nucleus."

however, whether it touches the real point at issue, for it would simply bring the event into the category of the unusual and abnormal, without suggesting that it has any spiritual significance of its own. The deeper question would yet remain, why the Incarnation should have been consummated in this way and not under the ordinary laws of generation, a question which must remain unanswered unless far higher considerations are brought in. For in this case, as in the case of all the Gospel miracles, what makes it believable is something more than mere physical plausibility. Miracles must ever remain "monstrous" occurrences, unless they can be shown to have been wrought under the dominance of spiritual laws—laws which necessitate, and, at the same time, condition them. The way, therefore, to make the miraculous birth of Jesus credible lies along another plane of thought than that which demonstrates its physiological possibility. The real question may be thus put—was it essential that it should have taken place in the way it did, and not in another? In other words, what is the relation between the *doctrine* of the Incarnation and the *fact* of the Virgin Birth? Is the one a help to the acceptance of the other? That this is so will, we think, be clear if the following considerations are borne in mind:—

1. The ordinary process of generation inevitably suggests *the beginning of a new personality. Ex hypothesi*, this was not so with the Saviour; for any real doctrine of the Incarnation postulates that prior existence which, according to St. John, He Himself distinctly claimed on more than one occasion,[1] and which is clearly implied, as we have seen, in the writings of St. Paul. That the Divine Word might have been incarnated along the full line of human

[1] John viii. 58, xvii. 5, 24.

generation is, of course, obvious. "With God all things are possible." But should we in that case have been able to grasp, as a living truth, the fact that there was in the Man Christ Jesus an embodiment of the Eternal Nature *sui generis*, altogether different in kind from the process by which God revealed Himself through good men? Have those who would spare *this* marvel from the Evangelic narrative, while clinging still to a real doctrine of the Incarnation, rightly gauged their indebtedness to the *narrative* for their belief in the *doctrine*? That the unique *method* of the Incarnation harmonises with its unique *character* as the most marvellous as well as the most beautiful fact in human history is surely most clear; the one is the natural complement of the other. By way of illustrating this fact, it may be pointed out that a denial of the physical fact almost always results, either in a denial of the truth of which it is the counterpart, or in a theory of the Incarnation which is partial and halting; and, conversely, it is to be noted that, as a rule, where the Incarnation is heartily believed in, the Virgin Birth presents no particular difficulty, but, on the other hand, becomes full of meaning. It is significant that among the earliest Christian writers there are no believers in the Incarnation who are not also believers in the Virgin Birth; and this, with certain striking exceptions, is also true of the latest writers on the subject. It is, for instance, impossible not to be impressed with this in Keim's treatment of the question, and to note how the almost scornful attitude he takes up towards the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ colours his whole outlook on the narrative of the Birth,[1] and it would be easy to point out the same fact in the case of other thinkers.

[1] "Jesus of Nazara," II. 55–57.

2. The Virgin Birth also fits in with the doctrine of the *sinlessness of Jesus Christ.* There are certain recent writers, chiefest among whom perhaps is the fine thinker just mentioned[1] (following here, as he so often does, Schleiermacher,[2] and in turn being followed by Dr. E. A. Abbott[3]), who cling to the moral miracle while rejecting the physical. Schleiermacher, for instance, says that the birth from a virgin is of no importance to faith, but is at most a matter of fact depending on the trustworthiness of the Gospels. This view is opposed to the angel's message to Mary, who brings the two ideas into their logical relation in the words of the Annunciation: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: WHEREFORE also that which is to be born SHALL BE CALLED HOLY."[4] And it is equally opposed to the laws of heredity that any one born into the full solidarity of the race should be free from the initial taint of evil; and though the moral miracle of the Incarnation might have been consummated in spite of these or any other natural laws, it is more than doubtful if it would have been believable to the human understanding. It is not without significance that Dr. Martineau, in clear opposition to his own earlier view and to that of the older Socinians, began by first denying the Virgin Birth, afterwards surrendering his belief in the sinless life.[5] Here again the doctrine and the fact prove their close and essential kinship.

3. Once more, the Virgin Birth harmonises with the

[1] Keim, "Jesus of Nazara," II. 63.

[2] "Der Christliche Glaube," II., pp. 67, 84, 85: cf. Bruce's "Miraculous Element in the Gospels," p. 352.

[3] "Onesimus," Book III., § 7.

[4] Luke i. 35.

[5] "Seat of Authority in Religion," p. 651: cf. Bruce's "Apologetics," p. 410.

unquestionable fact that the person and work of the *Lord Jesus Christ was a new departure in human life and history.* He is called the Second Adam, *i.e.* the starting-point, as has already been suggested, of the New Humanity, whose *differentia* is a spiritual vitality before undreamt of, and a power of victory over evil hitherto unparalleled. Just as the race on its lower side is bound in a mysterious kinship of evil with the First Parent of the race, so is the New Humanity bound into a spiritual kinship of holiness with the New Man from heaven, who gives to such as receive of His Spirit a profound "moral reconstruction" which is but the transmitted quality of His own life. St. Paul's exposition of this truth inevitably suggests that the same creative power which started the first law of solidarity was similarly at work in the second, and that in the relationship of Christ and His people we have a counterpart of that by which we are linked with "Adam," who in his argument stands for the principle of moral solidarity in the race. That this fresh beginning in the career of humanity has been made is in itself a miracle. There were no indications that such a fact was possible by means of the "resident forces" of the human heart—using the word "resident" in the restricted sense; such an impulse must come from the spiritual environment acting on the soul, that is, by the descent of "power from on high." The Incarnation was the channel along which this power broke into the exhausted soil of humanity, and fructified it, and "made all things new." It was in keeping with the miraculous character of this process that it should have a counterpart in the physical sphere which was equally miraculous; and as both facts equally demand a belief in the supernatural, if the spiritual miracle be conceded, enough has been said to make the physical not only credible in itself, but truly

helpful though of course not essential to the full apprehension of the other.

4. There is still another aspect from which the Virgin Birth gives help to faith. One of the ever-recurrent difficulties felt in forming a theory of the Person of Christ arises from what is called the "union of natures." In what manner were the Divine and human elements interwoven in the "Person" of the Saviour? Did the fact involve a "double consciousness"? How was the unity of the Person maintained in spite of the union of natures?

On the basis of a completely human birth, we do not seem able to throw much light on this difficulty. It gives us no help, but rather imposes a barrier, to its elucidation. How, and when, and where, and in what sense the Divine element was joined with the already perfect human personality must, on the hypothesis of His ordinary generation, remain an insoluble mystery; and just as we have seen that there is a tendency on the part of those who deny the Virgin Birth to lose their belief in the sinlessness of Jesus, so there is a marked tendency on their part to drift into using the word "divinity" as applied to Him in a purely figurative sense, and to mean by it only that Jesus was filled perfectly with the sense of the Divine Fatherhood—as *we all ought to be, but are not.* For on this hypothesis, the Divine element in Him was either something superadded to the already complete human personality, or it consisted merely in a heightening of the ordinary human consciousness of God, and a more perfect fellowship of spirit with Him. In the first case it is hard to retain a clear and consistent belief in the essential unity of His Person; a *tertium quid* seems ever to slip in to perplex us in our thought of Him. In the second case, His Divinity is in peril, for it would consist simply in a more perfect spiritual humanity than we possess.

On the basis, however, of the supernatural birth, this difficulty is minimised, and we are freed from both horns of the dilemma. According to this, the individual life of Jesus began by a special act of God: His humanity was as miraculously brought about as His Divinity. The human nature, in other words, was the mould in which the Divine nature historically appeared; the pre-existent Logos took shape in a human person, realised itself under the limitation of human faculties and relations, and submitted itself to the narrow restrictions of physical conditions. Jesus was thus infinitely remote from us, in that the essence of His personality was Divine; He was infinitely near to us, in that He lived our life, fought our spiritual battles, bore our sins and our sorrows, was a Man in all that makes human experience and suffering, and died our death. He was "God manifest in the flesh." This view makes it easier for us to avoid the confusion of thought and feeling in which the union of the Divine and Human in Christ has ever tended to involve all theological speculations as to the Person of the Redeemer. Such a view chimes in with the Scriptural account of His birth; while on the contrary theory we are left in perpetual uncertainty as to the reality and extent of His difference from us, as well as His identity with us, as human beings.[1]

[1] This point is ably worked out in Clarke's "Outline of Christian Theology," where the position is thus summarised: "This view avoids all questions about double consciousness and will: it shows a single personality, neither wholly divine nor wholly human in consciousness and will, but partaking in both qualities; it shows why Jesus differed in consciousness from ordinary men, and why from God unincarnate; it relieves us of all question about His acting now as God and now as man; it makes His sinlessness seem reasonable. It does not solve all the difficulties of the case, but it solves more than other views, and corresponds reasonably well to the conditions that we find in the Scriptures" (page 273).

The right understanding of this great problem is thus seen to depend on that "principle of accommodation" which solves so many of the difficulties of Scripture. We are accustomed to believe that the Incarnation was for our sakes; it would save us much trouble and self-imposed difficulty if we remembered that the *method of its accomplishment* was also determined by our needs and limitations. There are, indeed, many accessory and non-essential elements in the method of Incarnation which are due to the historical environment of the age in which the event took place. The whole story is steeped in Jewish ideas and preconceptions, through which, however, the universal aspects of the mystery glow with unmistakable radiance. That Jesus came into the world as a Jew, bearing in every lineament the marks of His race and time, may seem to us hard of comprehension when we think of Him as the Saviour of the world, and the Son of the Highest; still more so the fact that He seemed to share in certain racial limitations both in His ideas and in His conception of His ministry.[1] All these facts, however, when approached from the point of view here suggested, only serve to show how completely the Saviour entered into the historical conditions of His mission, "descending into the lower parts of the earth," and ensphering Himself completely, for the better completion of His saving work, in the environal elements of His life on earth. For us all He was "born of a woman"; for the sake of His own generation He was "born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."[2] It is of supreme importance in studying any aspect of the Saviour's work on

[1] John iv. 22; Matt. xv. 24. With these passages may be linked those that suggest Jewish modes of thought, *e.g.* Luke vii. 9.

[2] Gal. iv. 4, 5.

earth to remember all this.[1] It is only when we realise the local and temporary side of that saving mission with vividness, that we are able to rise through it into the universal side which concerns all men of all lands and ages. Those who do so are saved from much of the perplexity felt at what may be termed the accidental and non-essential conditions of the historical Incarnation.

[1] The account given in Acts i. 9–11 of the Ascension becomes historically credible from the same standpoint. It was of the utmost importance that the Apostles and the infant Church should be fully persuaded that the Lord Jesus had finally vanished into the Unseen, and would no more visit His people, except through the influence and power of His Holy Spirit. If He had simply disappeared, as He had temporarily done before (Luke xxiv. 31), it would have been hard for them to believe that He might not come to them again, as He had to the disciples on their way to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13–35) and on the shores of Gennesaret (John xxi. 1–24). There would be imminent peril lest they should be interfered with in the accomplishment of their proper work by such natural longings and expectations. A visible Ascension into the clouds unquestionably savours of the notion of a materialistic heaven beyond the blue, and, so far, is entirely out of keeping with our present conception of the spirit-world. It is difficult, however, if not impossible, to imagine how the disciples could have been convinced of His final and irrevocable disappearance from the scenes of His earthly labours in any other way. Such an act of accommodation to the limited ideas of the time would at least be entirely in keeping with His gentle and sympathetic dealings with the mental limitations of His followers, and disposes of most of the objections raised against the story of the Ascension.

"*He was manifested to take away sins.*"
(1 JOHN iii. 5.)

Chapter II.—The Purpose of the Incarnation

Two Views of the Incarnation—Incarnation antecedently probable whether Evolutionary or Redemptive—Christ the Operative Power as well as Archetype in Creation—The Incarnation historically a Redemptive Process—*Cur Deus Homo?* answered by John iii. 16—Social as well as Individual Salvation involved.

I

THERE are two views held as regards the Divine motive behind the Incarnation, which may be briefly termed (1) the Evolutionary, and (2) the Redemptive or Soteriological. The former does not exclude the latter; the latter may, though not necessarily, exclude the former. According to the first, the Incarnation would have taken place apart from the Fall, being in the direct line of God's eternal purpose; Man's true development depending on a fuller and completer apprehension of, and communion with, his Maker, which could be truly and finally gained only through the medium of an Incarnation. According to the latter view, the Incarnation was conditioned by the Fall and by the Fall alone.

In one of his most striking sermons the late Dr. Dale of Birmingham proclaims his faith in the former position in these words: "The Incarnation was no afterthought; and that we should have eternal life and blessedness in Christ—and not in ourselves—was no afterthought. The Incarnation was no mere Divine expedient for recovering us from the loss and ruin which had come

upon us through our sin."[1] Elsewhere he says: "I suppose that the consummate union between Man and the Son of God would not have been possible apart from the consummate union effected in the Incarnation between the Son of God and Man."[2] The idea behind these words is manifestly this—that had Man retained his innocence when he arrived at the point of moral and spiritual responsibility, he would not have been able to realise the full possibilities of his nature without some such manifestation of God as was given in the coming of Christ to the world. Man being finite; his spiritual affinities being weak and in a sense embryonic; his soul being sense-bound, struggling slowly upward, and unable to reach forth to God without larger help than was furnished by the ordinary channels of communication between him and his Maker;—all this made it necessary that the Incarnation should take place at some time or other. For only so could Man rise into a clear notion of God; into an intelligent apprehension of his relations to His Maker; into a spiritual grasp of the Universe as the revelation not only of Law and Order but of the Divine Character as well. It is not Man's sinfulness alone that hinders this higher vision, but the natural limitation, as well as the imperfect development, of his spiritual faculties. There is in truth no reason for thinking that, had he not sinned, he would have been able, by the mere natural evolution of the powers implied in the possession of a spiritual personality, to come to a complete knowledge of God. There was need, surely, in the further development of a being of Man's nature, for the stooping of God's heart in order to aid him, as well as for the upward striving of the human towards

[1] "Fellowship with Christ, and other Sermons," p. 10.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 352, 353.

the Divine. And as Man is the first created being who has the faculty of forming and then aiming at an ideal of conduct, it is in the line of probability that God would in his case do that which He had not done elsewhere—provide him with a concrete Ideal to which he might conform.[1]

This conception of the Incarnation finds a certain support in the Christology of the New Testament, especially in the writings of Paul and John. Both these writers speak of the Son as the operative power in Creation, as well as the Archetype of all things. "In the beginning was the Word. . . . All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made." [2] "All things are *from* the Father, and we unto Him; all things are *through* the Son, and we through Him." [3] The Father is the one and universal source and end; the Son is the one and universal medium and actuating cause. Since creation is the revelation of the eternal power and order of God actualising itself in Time and Space, it was, in a sense, an Incarnation of God through the Son. But it was an impersonal Incarnation, if such a term is allowable; and when Man appeared on earth, himself a person, the process of Incarnation must rise into the level of the new conditions, otherwise it would stop short of its natural completion. From this point of view, it is almost if not quite inconceivable that the revealing process, started in the creation of matter, and progressively carried on to ever higher results in the ascending grades of life on earth, should have stopped at Man. It is in him that the final possibilities of this process are for the first time suggested; he is a person,

[1] See "The Nature of Christ," by William Marshall, pp. 30, 33, with references to Calvin, Dale, and Fairbairn.

[2] John i. 1-3. [3] 1 Cor. viii. 6 (sense of passage).

he is self-conscious, he is a spiritual creature. Therefore we might have expected that there would be a higher Incarnation of God in Man than in the lower orders of creation, in accordance with the superior possibilities of his nature. This Incarnation is of course in one sense already existent in the very fact of Man's presence on earth. He is in himself a revelation of God. But his higher nature yearns for a more perfect form of this revelation ; he cannot realise it for himself ; he needs a revelation which shall be a communion of spirit with spirit, of person with person. Thus, converging from the two sides—the human and the Divine —we find reasons for believing that the Incarnation is a fact antecedently probable, even had no sin come into the world. It would in that case have been necessary in order to fill out and complete the imperfect process of God's self-revelation, as well as the process of Man's self-realisation. The impersonal revelation of law is seen in its fulness in the broad fields of inorganic and organic creation ; the perfect revelation of personality is not seen till God appears in outward incarnate form, and the Word is made flesh. And so we may say with Dr. Fairbairn[1] in his great work on "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology" :—

"The Incarnation may be said to be the counterpart in the field of history of the Godhead in the field of thought. Through the Godhead we conceive Deity as so existing and conditioned that the Incarnation is possible ; through the Incarnation we conceive an historical Person as so placed that He realises the affinities of God and Man, and so constituted that He brings them into organic relations."

[1] "God as interpreted by Christ the Determinative Principle in Theology": see Div. III., chap. ii., § 1 (p. 471).

II

BUT whether this be so or not, it is unquestionable that, speaking from a historical and actual point of view, the Incarnation took the form of a Redemptive process.[1] It is at least a thoroughly consistent and tenable view that if Sin had not come into the world, God would have become incarnate in the person of His Son. Even though Man had continued to develop along the lines of his highest nature, we may consistently believe that Christ would have appeared in the flesh, in order that this evolution might be made more sure and perfect. But as Man did sin, it was inevitable that the fact of Incarnation should affiliate itself to the notion of a renewal rather than of a development of his nature. What might have taken place if the Fall had not happened we have a right at least to speculate. But when we have done that, we have to fall back on the actual course of events for our final and determinating position; and, when we do so, we cannot help seeing that the actual and operative purpose of Christ's appearing was to rescue Man from the power and consequences of his sinfulness.[2]

[1] For an able treatment of this question in its various bearings see Orr's "Christian Conception of God and the World," pp. 319 ff. Dr. Orr says: "The Incarnation has, indeed, immediate reference to Redemption; but it has at the same time a wider scope" (p. 327). It may be pointed out that among those who take the view advocated by the present writer are Westcott ("The Gospel of Creation" in his Commentary on the Epistles of John), Archbishop Trench ("University Sermons"), Rothe, Lange, Oosterzee, Martensen, Ebrard, etc.

[2] The following striking passage from Dr. Dale's "Fellowship with Christ" illustrates the same truth: "It is true, indeed, that the Incarnation itself is a Gospel, and a Gospel of infinite power and glory. I suppose that the eternal Son of God would have become man if man had never sinned, and had needed no redemption. A theologian, therefore, who is constructing a theory of the ideal relations between God and the human race—I might say between

The Incarnation from this point of view is necessitated by the very being and character of God. To allow Man to miss the mark of his creation, to fall short of his destiny, without doing what might be done to ensure that this destiny be attained, would be a confession of defeat on the part of God Himself; it would mean either that He was not omnipotent, or that He was morally indifferent to the highest interests of His highest creature—neither of which alternatives is credible. The whole creation would become a vast anomaly and enigma if Man were to be hopelessly and finally lost: for the Universe only becomes intelligible in Man; he is its coping-stone, its goal; without him, the whole history of the Past would lose its cohesion and rational sequence. In order, therefore, that the general system of things might not prove to be a wreck, instead of a drama which has its developing plot and its gradual culmination in a glorious and convincing spiritual climax; in order, if we may reverently express it so, that the reasonableness of God's method should be vindicated,—it was necessary that an outpouring of redemptive power should take place through

God and the Universe—will begin with the Incarnation; and the sufferings and death of Christ will appear in such a theory to be among those incidents of the Incarnation which have resulted from the actual condition of mankind. But the Christian Gospel is not a theory of God's ideal relations either to the universe or to the human race, though it discloses the foundations on which such a theory may be constructed. It finds man where he is. It is not a philosophy, but a Divine appeal to man in his guilt and weakness and misery. And, therefore, as I have said, Paul's Gospel began with the sufferings and death of Christ; and Peter found the very substance of the Gospel in the declaration of the sufferings of Christ and the glories which followed them. Whether we are preaching the Christian Gospel in foreign lands, or to our fellow-countrymen who have not yet received it, we shall do well to be faithful to the apostolic tradition. We should tell them that Christ died for all men, and died for the sins of all men; and that His sufferings and death are the ground of the actual relations between all men and God" (pp. 63, 64).

the same agency as that by which the Universe came into being at the first.

But it is not merely as a means of vindicating the Divine Power and Reason that the Incarnation took place. There are other attributes than these in the Divine Nature. God is in the essence of His being something deeper than Reason, something higher than Power. God is Love—He is the Infinite Father. "By the ethical necessities of His Nature," therefore, "He becomes the Saviour." As in creation He "emptied Himself," *i.e.* worked under conditions, in order that He might bring about ends to be attained in no other way, so in grace the Son "emptied Himself"—made Himself of no account, in order that He might redeem and renew humanity. The process by which He does this is of course in strict accord with the nature of Man as well as that of God. Any method which forced salvation on him would make salvation in an ethical sense impossible. Man is constituted a free being, and though God were to use all His moral influence on him, he would still be able to resist His will if he so chose. No compulsion could save a soul from death, though compulsion may often preserve a body from destruction. But by appealing as a Free Being to a free creature, salvation depends rather on the *quality* of the appeal than on its *force;* its force indeed depends entirely on its quality. The problem was to bring Man back to allegiance, to expel sin, and fill him again with God's fellowship and life; or, in the New Testament language, "to reconcile him" —and with him "all things—to Himself."[1] And so the redemptive process issues in a salvation not only of persons, but of all things, everything within and without being made new.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.

III

THE first and foremost motive and purpose of the Incarnation in our sinful world was, therefore, to save the soul from personal, and the race from collective, sin. The answer to the old question "*Cur Deus Homo?*" is to be found in the still older verse, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[1] It is everywhere the dominant thought of the New Testament writers, that Man is lost without God, and that God is brought within Man's reach through the revelation of Divine love in Christ. It is indeed so dominant that hardly any other aspect is clearly and ostensibly put forth in the Scriptures. Even a superficial reading of the Gospels and of the Epistles tells us unmistakably that this is the determining aspect of Christ's work for Man.

At the same time, a more careful and thorough examination of passages bearing on this subject will reveal another aspect of the Divine purpose in the Incarnation, and it is this that we have already dwelt on under the title of the Evolutionary Theory. Merely to check the downward process in human nature would not be a complete salvation. To stop that is only to bring Man back to the point at which he diverged from the true line of his spiritual development. Scarcely is it even that; for the consciousness of failure and of lost opportunity lies heavy on Man's mind and conscience, and he yearns for that which will enable him to turn this sense of defeat and bafflement into a sense of victory. He has also in him an *instinct* of development. He is not satisfied, once the remedial process

[1] John iii. 16.

is commenced, merely to go back to the point at which he parted with his higher evolution; his face is towards the future, and not the past; and having cast off the "brute inheritance," and the fallen nature, he looks for the perfect redemption of his whole being. And there are abundant passages in the New Testament, more particularly in the writings of St. Paul, which speak of the New Life as a growth, a true development, in both the individual and the race. The old sin-consciousness having been erased through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and the believer having accepted that as the ground of his justification before God, he is henceforth under the dominance of the Holy Spirit, who not only leads him into all truth, but is a vital atmosphere around his soul, cherishing all its upward tendencies, helping it to wrestle with all hindering evil influences, and drawing forth the slumbering forces of his nature that make for righteousness and holiness of life. This truth is put in many ways, and all of them may be easily translated into the modern Evolutionary phraseology. The Divine Life is in him so interwoven with the faculties and affinities of his nature, that he even loses his sense of separateness from its gentle but constraining influence. "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me· and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me."[1] This life of God in the soul is elsewhere described as "Christ in us, the hope of glory."[2] Other passages illustrating the same idea are the following: "Wherefore let us cease to speak of the first principles of Christ, and press on unto perfection"[3]—here the development is conceived as a higher and larger hold of God's truth,

[1] Gal. ii. 20. [2] Col. i. 27. [3] Heb. vi. 1.

growing from more to more; "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus"[1]—here the idea is that of a moral and spiritual fulness of life, the Divine ideal floating like a vision on the horizon which the hard-bested runner is earnestly striving to reach—"the goal of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."[2] Besides these there are many other passages which bring before us the *social* end towards which the Divine Life in Man is tending. Among these, first and foremost we must place the discourses of our Lord in which He speaks of the Kingdom of God. It is only of recent years, under the pressure of the perplexing social and political problems of our times, as well as through a more scientific treatment and classification of the teaching of Christ, that this sublime Idea has been rescued from the oblivion or semi-oblivion into which it had fallen during the period of Scholastic and Puritan Theology, which was juridical rather than Scriptural—a fact that illustrates John Robinson's dictum, that "God has much light hidden in His word, to break forth some day," *i.e.* as men were able and fitted to bear it. During the last half-century some of the finest works on the teaching of Christ have been based on His doctrine of the Kingdom, showing that His purpose in coming into the world was by no means fully accomplished in the salvation of individual souls, but that He came as much for the establishing of a Society which should embody the principles of the Divine life, as for the rescue of each believer from the grasp of sin. The latter purpose indeed was only a step towards the former, preparing the way for it, but incomplete without it. So close is the connection in

[1] Phil. iii. 12. [2] *Ibid.*, verse 14.

the mind of our Lord between the individual and social aspects of His regenerative work, that in one of His most characteristic sayings it is not easy to say on which He laid most stress, nor whether He meant the one or the other. "The Kingdom of Heaven is *within* you" may with equal correctness be read "The Kingdom of Heaven is *among* you,"[1] *i.e.* it is either within the heart of the individual as an unawakened possibility of character, or latent among the community as a social order. And though there is no manner of doubt that He viewed individual salvation as the prior and in a sense the more important fact, it is just as clear that He had it in His mind to found a Kingdom which should be a community of redeemed men and women linked in voluntary association for the social redemption of Man. This Kingdom was to be spiritual, not temporal; and it was to pervade all human institutions, without interfering with their free development and working. In its inception it was to be like a seed, enlarging from the most insignificant beginnings into a worldwide power;[2] in the principle of its growth it was to be like leaven,[3] spreading not by means of external aids, but by its own permeative influence and contagion; in the method of its growth it was not to follow the will and intention of those who work in it and who love it, but has secret laws of its own, which fulfil themselves in a mysterious manner and at their own times and seasons.[4]

It is clear that the apostolic writers had a similar conception of the work of Christ. He was not only to be the Saviour of individual believers, but also of mankind as a whole; and the development of His truth was to take a social as well as an individualistic

[1] Luke xvii. 21.
[2] Matt. xiii. 31, 32.
[3] *Ibid.*, verse 33.
[4] Mark iv. 26, 27.

form. There were to be not only new men and women, but a "new heaven and a new earth";[1] "all things are" to "become new";[2] there is to be final restitution and rehabilitation of the creation under the universal and unbroken sway of the Father—"And when all things have been subjected unto Him," *i.e.* the Son, "then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, *that God may be all in all*,"[3] in which it is suggested that the mission of the Son in coming to earth on His redemptive journey will at last be fully accomplished, and the victory of good over evil be final and complete.

We thus see that, even though the redemption wrought through Christ be in its first purpose simply restorative, it at last becomes a great world-process of a spiritually evolutionary kind, which not only aims at the restoration of Man to his primal position, but at a complete and perfect development of all his spiritual possibilities.

[1] Rev. xxi. 1. [2] 2 Cor. v. 17. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

"If Christ took our Nature upon Him (as we believe) by an act of love, it was not that of one but of all. He was not one man only among men, but in Him all humanity was gathered up. And thus now as at all time mankind are (so to speak) organically united with Him. His acts are in a true sense our acts, so far as we realise the union. His death is our death: His Resurrection, our Resurrection."

WESTCOTT

Chapter III.—The Mystery of the Cross

Correlation of Incarnation and the Cross—A Sacrifice that involves the whole Godhead—Sidelights of Science on Mystery of Vicarious Sacrifice—How the Cross bridges the Chasm between Man and God.

I

IN most theological textbooks, the Incarnation and the Atonement of Christ are usually dealt with as separate dogmas; but there is a point of view from which they melt into one larger generalisation, both being the manifestation of the redeeming love and purpose of God. And there is a distinct danger in dealing with them too much apart; for the Incarnation involves the Atonement as its supreme end, and the Atonement would be meaningless were the Incarnation not previously assumed and acknowledged. It is the fact that in Christ God was made manifest in the flesh that makes His sacrifice on Calvary a saving power and gives His death a redemptive significance. And it is the shallowest sciolism to speak as though the sacrifice involved in the death of our Lord on the Cross summed up the full extent of the application of that idea to His work. There was a special significance

in the sacrificial aspects of His sufferings "without the gate"; it was, we believe, something more than the crowning act of Obedience in a perfect life of service. But the sacrifice of the Son of God began with His coming into the world; and His whole life was an offering to God for the sins of the human race.

In saying this of course we assume the doctrine of the Incarnation to be a true account of the mystery hidden within the earthly life of Jesus Christ; if indeed that is not so, the whole of our inquiry falls to the ground. And what we have said is clearly according to the meaning of the New Testament teaching. To the Apostle Paul there was nothing more near or dear than the thought of the self-sacrifice of His Master in descending into the realm of human life and limitation, and in several passages he characteristically urges the Divine example as a pattern, on the infinite scale, of what God expects from men in the finite channels of their daily duty. In inculcating the duty of sharing their worldly goods with their poorer brethren, he reminds the Corinthians thus: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich."[1] In the Philippians, he presses on his readers the vast importance of humility, and enforces his appeal by again bringing before them the ideal spirit of self-sacrifice exhibited in Jesus Christ: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, *but emptied Himself*, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."[2] In both these passages and in many

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 9. [2] Phil. ii. 5-8.

others the fundamental idea is that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ began, not with the sufferings consummated in His death on Calvary, but with the assumption of our nature. He became *poor* for our sakes; He *emptied* Himself; He took the form of a servant; He *humbled* Himself. What do these strong and significant terms mean? They clearly refer to the prenatal glory of Christ,—"the Glory which I had with Thee before the world was"[1] is an expression used by Himself concerning the same fact,—and they imply that the assumption of an inferior nature was a part of the sacrifice which He underwent on our behalf. And if indeed He be what the Christian consciousness has conceived Him to be, the Second Person in the Trinity, does it not necessarily follow that in thus humbling Himself, and emptying Himself of all His wealth of resources, He did undergo a loss such as we can only dimly figure in the strongest language at our command? Think of it for a moment. What was the wealth that He gave up in order to become poor? The wealth of creative energy; the wealth of perfect unbroken communion with the Father and with the Spirit; the wealth of boundless power which was also boundless repose, of unceasing activity yet fathomless peace. Think of the beauty of the Divine idea of the ordered Universe, and of the deep joy of seeing that idea fulfilling itself—everywhere but in this insignificant planet?—in unbroken harmony and faultless progression; new worlds scattering like sparks from the central fires of Deity, and slowly but surely evolving from stage to stage till they reached their climax. If we fail to enter into such supernal notions, let us try to think of our own moments of highest spiritual joy when we have felt our soul in deepest communion with God, and then let us intensify that

[1] John xvii. 5.

experience a million-fold. Let us think of the delight of a duty which is also a supreme pleasure, of work which is the spontaneous attainment of our highest ideal, in which the sense of effort is lost in that of easy performance; and let us then enlarge that consciousness till it enfolds the Universe in its mighty embrace.[1] We shall still have but a dim figure of what our Lord gave up when He took upon Him to become man, and "did not abhor the virgin's womb"; but we shall think with a new sense of the range and beauty of that sacrifice which the Son of God underwent when He became the Son of Man. There may be, there undoubtedly is, something unique in the nature of the specific sacrifice for sin offered on Calvary,—this has in all ages been felt and acknowledged by Christian thinkers. But it does not annul, and it ought not to obscure, the wider fact that the saving sacrifice of the Lord Jesus began, not with the on-coming of the throes of death, but with the manger of Bethlehem, where the mystery of His human life began.

We shall not realise the full force of the Incarnation idea as a Divine sacrifice till we go even deeper than that, and accept the fact that it involved the sacrifice of the whole Godhead as well. "Theology has no falser idea," says Dr. Fairbairn, "than that of the impassibility of God. If He is capable of sorrow, He is capable of suffering; and were He without the capacity for either, He would be without any feeling of the evil of sin or the misery of man. The very truth that came by Jesus Christ may be said to be summed up in the passibility of God. But . . . to be passible is to be capable of sacrifice; and in the presence of sin the capability could not but become the reality. To confine

[1] See a striking discourse by Principal Caird in his volume of "Sermons," on the "Loneliness of Christ's Sufferings" (1858).

the idea of sacrifice to the Son is to be unjust to His representation of the Father. There is a sense in which the Patripassian theory is right; the Father did suffer, though it was not as the Son that He suffered, but in modes distinct and different. The being of evil in the universe was to His moral nature an offence and a pain, and through His pity the misery of man became His sorrow. But this sense of man's evil and misery became the impulse to speak and to help; and what did this mean but the disclosure of His suffering by the surrender of the Son? But this surrender, as it was the act, represented the sacrifice and the passion of the whole Godhead. Here degree and proportion are out of place; were it not, we might say the Father suffered more in giving than the Son in being given. He who gave to duty had not the reward of Him who rejoiced to do it. Though we speak but in the limited language of our own conditions, yet, may we not ask, must not the act by which the Son emptied Himself have affected and, as it were, impoverished the Godhead? The two things are coincident and inseparable; here, pre-eminently, one member could not suffer without all suffering. The humiliation of the Son involved the visible passion and death, but the surrender by the Father involved the sorrow that was the invisible sacrifice."[1] We must try to realise the meaning of this element of sacrifice as applying to the Godhead, otherwise we shall miss one of the most quickening thoughts in the Bible, and lose the beauty of some of its central declarations. For instance, we are told that this principle is the measure of the Divine love. "God *so* loved the world, that He *gave* His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[2]

[1] "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology," pp. 483, 484.
[2] John iii. 16.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."[1] What do these words mean if not that the essence and act of sacrifice was the surrender of the Son by the Father? It is this faith that makes the Incarnation and the Sacrifice of Christ so elevating and quickening as a renewing power over human character. An act of power on the part of the Divine might appal us, it might create awe and admiration, but it could not have any regenerating influence. All truths must take a moral aspect in order to sway our moral nature; and the moral side of this truth is that it cost God the Father pangs and sufferings whose depths we cannot even dimly divine, in order that the Son might descend into our nature and appear in the flesh. No exposition of the doctrine of the Incarnation can be complete therefore until this its highest and divinest side is realised and accepted. Without it, it is a mere portent; with it, it is a saving truth.

II

THE root-idea in the Atonement has been expressed for the main part in legal and juridical language. The payment of a "debt," the "satisfaction of justice," the "bearing of a penalty,"—these are but a few typical phrases in immemorial use in stating the nature of the Divine sacrifice offered for us on Calvary by the Eternal Son. They are expressions which receive their justification from the language of Scripture itself. The earlier revelation of the Old Testament provided the moulds into which the mystery of the Passion naturally embodied itself, and unless we are prepared to deny

[1] 1 John iv. 10.

that there is a Divine element in the form as well as the substance of that preliminary unfolding of the truth, we must not put away the symbols made use of in it as though they were outworn and useless for our purpose. At the same time, since in every age the Christian consciousness has endeavoured to restate the truth in the language of the time, so as to make its central meaning more intelligible and impressive, the question is thoroughly pertinent, whether the moulds of thought that characterise the present furnish a fresh channel for the presentation of the same fundamental Fact. There are not wanting serious signs that the old juridical language fails to appeal as it once did to the spiritual consciousness of a large section of Christian believers. It sounds artificial; it stands aloof from the dominant ideas of the time; there is not a little in it which shocks the moral sense of many devout minds that are earnestly desirous of arriving at something like a consistent theory of the Atonement. The result is widespread unrest and unhappiness, loss of conviction and emphasis in speaking and thinking on this great theme, and failure to lay hold with vivid conviction of the fact itself, that in virtue of what Christ did for men on the Cross, we attain to forgiveness of sin, and the right to enter on the higher privileges of the Christian life. And so the question presses vehemently for solution—can we co-ordinate the idea of a Redemptive Sacrifice for sin, as it is everywhere assumed and emphasised in the Christian Revelation, with the great cosmic process of Evolution which in all other departments dominates the thought of the present?

It would perhaps be well to acknowledge at the outset that so far the time does not seem to have come for a complete restatement of the doctrine of the Atonement

on Evolutionary lines. On this ultimate mystery, we "see as in a mirror, darkly," and the day is not yet. But we believe we can at least suggest a few thoughts which indicate in what direction we are to look for a clearer outlook.

The principle of Vicarious Sacrifice has received a powerful exposition in three directions through the development of scientific thought.

1. Beginning on the lowest plane, there has been a remarkable unfolding of the law in organic nature whereby *the weak have to suffer for the benefit of the strong*.

We have already dwelt somewhat fully on the extent and intensity of suffering which we find in the organic world, and have shown how Evolutionary Science for the first time has thrown a vivid ray of light on the problem, by demonstrating the beneficent purpose of this suffering. There is no aimless pain or agony in the world of life. This deeply rooted fact always works for good. So far as the individual is concerned, we cannot say that the suffering it has to undergo always, or even frequently, brings a compensatory benefit in its train. Its pains are predominantly for others; it suffers for the good of its kind. According to the law of natural selection, more creatures are born than can live out their lives: probably only the minority can do so; the majority are pushed off from the plane of existence before they can procreate their kind. Now it follows from the conditions of the case that those who survive are the strongest, the healthiest, the best fitted to live a full and happy life, and to carry their species to perfection. And so the individual perishes not only that the species may *survive*, but that it may *progress*. The lower species, again, hold their tenure of being only in so far as they do not

interfere with, or rather, perhaps, in so far as they help the higher to an adequate opportunity to live and to develop. And so when Tennyson, in a moment of despondency, accuses Nature of aimless cruelty for bringing so many children to the birth, and then crushing them ruthlessly under foot,—

"Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life.

. . . . .

"'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go,'"—

he gives utterance to a pessimism which in his own truer mood of faith he leaves behind, when he affirms, what is unquestionably true,—

"That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy d,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

"That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain."

When Tennyson wrote these fine lines he gave utterance to what could then only be a matter of faith in the goodness of God. Now they are a matter of knowledge, for the insight of the prophet has become the irrefutable dictum of the scientist, who has not only shown *how*, but *why*, there is so much "undeserved suffering" in the teeming fields of life. It is all that life, working under the conditions necessarily, as we must believe, laid down in the constitution of the

universe, may climb up higher and ever higher along the pathway that leads from the star-mist of primeval chaos to the aureole of the saint in the heavenly places. That pathway is crimsoned with the blood of countless generations of lives that have been sacrificed on the way; but there is no doubt that it leads to a Divine and splendid goal.

2. Let us rise a step higher. There is a second and higher form of vicarious suffering in the world—*that of the strong for the weak.*

Prof. Drummond in his "Ascent of Man" has shown that in Nature there is another struggle than the struggle for existence which dates from the beginning of creation; that there are two struggles going on contemporaneously—the struggle for others, as he rightly calls it, and the struggle for self; and the development of life is due to the combined struggle, the selfish and the unselfish, the struggle for self and the struggle for others than self. "Creation," he writes, "is a drama, and no drama was ever put on the stage with only one actor. The struggle for life is the 'villain' of the play no more; and like 'Villain' in the play, its chief function is to react on the other players for higher ends. There is in fact a second factor, which we might venture to call the struggle for the life of others, which plays an equally prominent part Even in the early stages . . . its contribution is real; while in the world's later progress—under the name of Altruism—it assumes a sovereignty before which the earlier struggle pales into insignificance."[1]

This second form of sacrificial suffering is seen best in the great principle of parentage. There are some male creatures who die in the act of procreation, and

[1] "Ascent of Man," p. 13. See also "The Theology of an Evolutionist," by Lyman Abbott, pp. 94 ff.

some females who perish at the moment of giving birth to their offspring. There we have this principle in its automatic and most uncompromising form ; the parent's life is literally given for the child's. As we rise in the scale of life, however, it takes other and less drastic forms. The mother-bird surrenders herself entirely to her young during the earlier stages of their existence, imprisoning herself in the nest, that she may hatch her eggs and shelter her birdlings ; while the father-bird becomes a forager, and grows lean and weak in the effort to provide food for the "family at home." "The struggle of the bird in the forest is for the birdling—the struggle of father and mother for children. So even the wild beasts forget their savagery, and instead of devouring their young, they hunt for them and carry home the spoil." And in this beautiful effort there is real sacrifice, real suffering. The instinct is rooted deep in Nature that the strong should suffer for the weak, and should give up personal pleasures and indulgences in order to defend and cherish that young life which as yet cannot struggle for itself. Sometimes birds and beasts will even give their lives in defence of their little ones—the lioness for her whelps, the wolf for her suckling, the stork for her burning young in the flaming chimney. And the higher the order of life, the greater is the demand made on the sacrifice of the parents. As we rise in the scale, we find that the young are born more and more helpless, so that the call on the parents for the ministries of love becomes more and more imperious. In man, the principle comes to its perfect earthly fruit. We come into the world more dependent than any other order of creatures, and all through the long years of infancy and childhood we lean altogether on the love and care of our parents. First there is the call for physical shelter and nourishment ;

later on the call for discipline, training, and education, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. This is the glory of the home—the willing sacrifice of the strong for the weak, the surrender by the mature of privileges for the undeveloped, a Divine outpouring of pity and help for those who as yet are weak in will and ignorant of the tragic issues of life. Indeed, an incalculable share of the so-called human struggle for existence is simply the struggle of parents in this sense for their children. The two forms of effort are inextricably intertwined, and in the world of business the higher element largely hallows and redeems the lower from what would otherwise be a pitiless selfishness. Even the "competitions" of city life are largely due to the passionate desire of men and women to provide the opportunity of a full and noble life for those dependent on them; it is the strong fighting each other, not for an undue share of the good things of life for themselves, but for those "little ones at home" who cannot as yet fight for their own hand.

3. And so we come in sight of the third, and highest, form of vicarious sacrifice to be found in the world—*that of the good for the bad*, the just for the unjust, which is perfectly embodied in the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross.

Just as the higher sacrifices of motherhood and fatherhood for childhood are found in prophetic form among beings lower than Man, so is this highest form of all found in germ in human life, and is truly prophetic of the Divine sacrifice. History is full of stirring evidence of the fact that the life of mankind can be raised to a higher intellectual and spiritual plane only through the sacrifice of the noble for the ignoble, the learned for the ignorant, the holy for the corrupt. "Life can only come from life," and the lower can be lifted

to the plane of the higher only at the expense of the higher as it stoops to lift the lower to its own level. The bridge that spans the gap between these planes of being is *sympathy*; the motive power that puts the treasures of the higher life at the disposal of the lower for its good is *love*. The life that stoops must in one sense be identical with that which it would uplift, otherwise it cannot touch the springs of response and fill the enfeebled will with its own victorious energy; in another sense, it must be far removed from it, higher in quality, fuller in resources, uncontaminated by the disabilities which keep the lower down, and make it incapable of rising by its unassisted efforts. Granted these conditions, there is scarcely a limit to the law whereby the many may be uplifted by the efforts of the few. The choice personalities of the world are able to inundate average humanity with their enthusiasm, and fill them with the pulse of their own higher life. We are made spiritually inflammable, and at the touch of genius, virtue, holiness, we are raised out of our narrow limitations, and fired into the faith that all things are possible to us.

History is largely the narrative of how the few thus impregnate the many with their thought and their ideals. And history on every page reveals the heavy penalty involved in the process. For by some mysterious law all life-giving is costly; and it is predominantly true of the highest form of life. Heroes must become martyrs ere they can persuade the world of their heroism. Till the prophet has sealed his testimony with his blood, his message is almost always rejected. Had the Saviour not died, His revelation of the Divine forgiveness would never have been credible to a sinful world. It is not holiness that impresses men, but holiness suffering because it is holy; it is not love

that wins them, but love "pouring itself out unto death" for their sakes; it is not the Incarnate Son of God who persuades them to obedience, but the Son dying for the sins of the world. This is the third principle of sacrificial suffering which is rooted into the constitution of the universe—the good for the bad, "the just for the unjust," the fit for the unfit, that the unfit may become fit, and just, and holy. Were it not for the corruption that has poisoned the springs of our life, the necessity for this law would not have arisen; as it is, we know that "without shedding of blood is no remission of sins," and that only as Christ became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the Cross, was He able to bring many sons unto glory. So far at least are we carried towards an apprehension of the Atonement by the facts of life itself, as revealed in every line of history, and engraven on the very pillars of the world.[1]

III

THE Incarnation, as we have seen, includes the notion of sacrifice in the largest sense, not only during the death on the Cross, but during the whole of our Lord's life on earth; and not of the Son only, but of the whole Godhead also. But there was a special sacrificial element in the Son's work to which reference is made on almost every page of the New Testament, and we must concentrate our minds for a short time on that.

Jesus lived and died in order that the breach caused by sin might be healed, and the union that is essential to the spiritual development of Man between him and his God might be renewed. In what way and in what sense did His sacrifice realise this sublime end?

Let us consider for a moment the effects of sin, the

[1] See on this whole subject Lyman Abbott's "Theology of an Evolutionist," especially chaps. vi.—viii., for useful suggestions.

disease, in order that we may the better understand Atonement, the remedy.

In our consciousness of personal sin there are three irreducible factors.

1. The first is the *sense of Guilt.*[1]

Viewed objectively, guilt is ill-desert. It means that a man has transgressed a Divine law, and that he deserves that the full penalty of the violation of that law ought to fall upon him. This penalty implies the anger and disfavour of God; the moral deterioration which always accompanies a state of sin; the evil consequences affecting soul and body which accompany spiritual deterioration; the tendency to grow ever harder and more depraved and identified with the evil thing; and those deeper and more mysterious visitations of Divine wrath which are ever revealed in the Bible as hanging over the head of the sinner, both in this world and in that which is to come: all these are elements in the penalty of transgression. If a man has sinned, *he deserves* that these penalties should fall upon him; and they should *ex hypothesi* fall upon him personally, as the one who has transgressed.

Viewed subjectively, guilt involves the recognition of a Moral Order which commands obedience, and, in the Christian sense, it also involves the recognition of a Moral Lawgiver of whose personal holy will this moral order is the perfect expression. The Prodigal's confession, "I have sinned against heaven [here is the moral order], and in Thy sight [here is the Personal Lawgiver], and am no more worthy,"[2] is a perfect expression of the subjective aspect of guilt. Sin is revealed as disobedience, from the standpoint of the Creator; and as wilful and wicked self-assertion, from

[1] For the distinction between moral and "theological" guilt see p. 198 (*ante*).

[2] Luke xv. 18, 19.

the standpoint of the creature; and as implying a feeling of blameworthiness from the standpoint of conscience, which is the voice of both.

2. Allied to, but not quite synonymous with, this feeling of guilt is the *sense of alienation* which is caused by sin from the face and favour of God.

It has been said that the chief end of Man is to "know God and to enjoy Him for ever." The sense of sin implies, and in a way deepens, the consciousness of God, and makes it more vivid; but it quite destroys the joy that ought to accompany that consciousness. Man, if he had remained sinless, would have rejoiced in the very thought of God. But because he has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, this is no longer so. His confession, as part and parcel of his sin, is "I remembered God, and was troubled."[1] "Therefore am I troubled at His presence; when I consider, I am afraid of Him."[2] A feeling of the distance to which sin has removed him from God's presence and favour haunts and pursues him; and while he cannot forget God, at least in the earlier stages of the evil process, the thought of God brings no peace and bestows no blessing. Like a cloud rising from a miasmatic soil, and hiding the brightness of the sun, so has this cursed thing hidden the brightness of the Divine countenance; and so disabling is it in its effects that not even God Himself can undo the evil so long as the union between the sinner and his sin remains unbroken. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but *your iniquities have separated* between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear."[3] And so while Man continues sinful in

[1] Psalm lxxvii. 3. [2] Job xxiii. 15.
[3] Isaiah lix. 1, 2.

thought and fact, he is cut off from the fountain of his highest life and happiness.

3. There is in the sinful human consciousness another factor. It is the *sense of utter inability* on the part of Man to remedy the condition into which he has fallen.

In every age and in every land, there has been an attempt on the part of Man to bridge over the chasm between him and his God. By sacrifice and penance, by humiliation and contrition, by long prayers and elaborate ritual, in a thousand ways and by a thousand subterfuges, he has endeavoured to set right the bitter past, and wash out his guilty stains. Whatever may be the inefficacy of heathen sacrifices, they are at least an effectual witness to the earnest desire of those who have offered them to atone for sin. But in spite of all there has been no real sense that they are effectual. "Who shall tell whether the gods be truly propitiated by our sacrifices?" was the cry of the heathen poet. "And it was so . . . that they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening oblation; but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded."[1] This is really the inward impression that has been left on the mind of humanity by all its efforts to "feel after God, if haply it may find Him." The desire to be forgiven has been there; the willinghood to do anything that would appease Divine wrath, and the subtle voice telling that the way of reconciliation is the way of sacrifice. But when the practical question has then been asked, "How and in what way shall we offer an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord?" no satisfactory reply has been found. The deepest intuitions of the heart have always told us that of ourselves we can do nothing that will merit acceptance at the hands of the Most High as an atonement for sin. In view

[1] 1 Kings xviii. 29.

of the All-holy Will, we can at our highest and best only say when we have done all, we are "unprofitable servants, we have done that which it was our duty to do."[1] How then can anything that we do, since we can never do more than perform our present duty, atone for the past? It is impossible; there is no way of atonement on the human side.

Now the Christian revelation of the Incarnation meets these three elements in the human consciousness of sin, and provides a remedy for them all. As our Sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ provides that which both honours the Divine Law and satisfies the demands of justice. By His revelation of God as seen in the whole of His teaching and life, He helps to persuade Man, in a way that is authoritative and winsome, of the Divine Love and Goodness, and so to bridge over that chasm which was made by sin between the Divine Father and the earthly child; and by the peculiar relationship which He bears to God and Man, He has solved the problem of how a sacrifice apparently objective has a subjective value and power.

The whole subject is focussed in the last point. When it is asked in what way can an offering made on behalf of others be efficacious in the sight of God, it is easy to reply in the negative, and pour scorn on the notion that the death of Christ can have had any propitiatory effect on the mind of God, and can remove from the human conscience the load of its heavy guilt; but this arises from a defective notion of our Lord's Person. He was not, in one sense, an objective sacrifice at all. By His mystic union with our humanity, He was "Another who was not another." He manifested the holiness of God in a human life which was typical, perfect, complete; and He did so in the form of an

[1] Luke xvii. 10.

obedience that was absolutely unique and without "spot or wrinkle or any such thing." And this He did as One in organic union with our nature, who was the "representative Man," the "Alter Ego" of every one, the higher "Self" which is latent in all men, the "Federal Head" of the race. Therefore, when we read of Him as bearing our sins "in His own body on the tree," it does not simply mean that He took them on Him in the way of sympathy and sorrowed over them as those of other people's; He bore them as One who Himself was a true Man, and who as a Man felt the sad and bitter shame they involved to that nature which He had taken upon Him, and He offered up a perfect repentance for them, and by His repentance condemned them, as our repentance could never have done. This is what is meant by that expression "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh [*i.e.* because of the sinfulness of the flesh], God, sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."[1] And as the essence of the true sacrifice was always the offering not of the dead body of a victim, but of the life[2] of the victim as representative of the life of the offerer, so in the great Sacrifice of which all the Levitical sacrifices were but types and shadows, the essence of the propitiation was in the offering of a life of perfect obedience to the Divine will as the representative of our humanity. He became "obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."[3] This does not mean that we have here exhausted the meaning of that mystic fact—the death of the Son of God on the Cross of shame and suffering; we are not in a position to tell all, nor indeed more than a

[1] Rom. viii. 3.
[2] "For the life [soul] of the flesh is in the blood (Lev. xvii. 11).
[3] Phil. ii. 8.

small part, of its Godward significance. That there is something unique in that death, and in the very fact of its being the death of Christ, is perfectly clear from a score of passages in the New Testament.[1] There will always be a residuum of intractable mystery in the atoning work of Christ, which will elude the understanding and put to scorn every theory by which we attempt fully to account for it.

Leaving that ultimate question aside, let us see in what way the revelation of a suffering Saviour has helped to undo the effects of Sin on the human soul.

1. It helps to do so by throwing light on the character of God.

For it shows that He was not an angry tyrant to be appeased by that which Man had not in his power to give, but a Holy Father who was Himself willing and anxious to do that which was necessary in order to undo the evil. That this is a truth quite peculiar to Christianity, he who runs through the elements of "Comparative Religions" may read; and it has always been the initial motive power that Christianity has exercised on the heart of men, disposing them to repentance and hatred of sin. It draws forth the noblest form of gratitude to believe that "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us"; and it does that which no other sentiment, such as the mere fear of punishment, or the dread of eternal consequences, could ever do; for it raises us into a higher plane of feeling and action than is possible through either of these sentiments.[2]

2. It throws light on the nature of Man, sinful though he be, by linking it with that of God.

[1] On this perplexing subject see "Lux Mundi," pp. 293, 294.

[2] This is the true meaning of 2 Cor. v. 14, where the genitive is objective, not subjective; it is "the love of Christ to us" that "constrains" us, not our love to Him. See Meyer's Commentary *in loco*

The fact that our nature was capable of receiving a Divine visitor, and of incarnating God in a new and unparalleled sense, is proof of our high place in the Universe, if such proof were needed in addition to that which is furnished so unequivocally by Science But Science can only show our superiority in creation by comparing us with that which is beneath us; the Incarnation, on the other hand, reveals our dignity by unfolding our relationship to One above us. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth"[1]—this is the highest charter of our greatness as a race we have ever received, or ever can receive. It is but the concrete and authoritative expression of the ancient dictum, "The true Shekinah is Man!" It proves that Man is potentially God's son, or God's greater Son could not have revealed Himself in our nature.[2] If Man had not been made "in God's image," the Only Begotten could not have appeared "in the flesh,"[3] and His death would have been a mere illusion.

[1] John i. 14.

[2] Fairbairn, *l.c.*, p. 473, says: "The natures are not contradictory or mutually exclusive, but their affinity or kinship expresses their reciprocal susceptibility. God is, as it were, the eternal possibility of being incarnated, man the permanent capability of incarnation." (See also Milligan, "On the Resurrection," pp. 164, 165.)

[3] *Ibid.*: "The natures, if He is to be qualified for His work, must be distinct. Only their integrity must not be developed into antagonism or incompatibility. The union within the Person is not a work of mere omnipotence, but expresses a real affinity, ethically mediated, though personally realised" (pp. 478, 479). Under this point consider the following words from Mr. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture" (close of chap. i.). He is speaking of the essential distinction between the human and the Divine natures: "Besides being anterior, He is separate. Should we find in the pages of the Old Testament a story of deification, we should at once know it to be spurious, because in contradiction alike as to letter and as to spirit of the entire context. . . . It is, I hope, not presumptuous to proceed a step further, and

But if the Incarnation links us in nature with God, it also shows in another sense that we are essentially different in nature from Him. For that Man was made in the image of God cannot mean that he is Divine in essence, otherwise the Incarnation and sacrifice of Jesus Christ would not be events out of the common. The only supposition on which that mystery can have its true place in our thoughts is that there is a gap, wide and deep, between the two natures. In other words, the Incarnation was an act of condescension. Man could not look at it as a right. The condescension of God in taking on Him the form of a Man was the crowning proof of His ineffable love to our race. This is its spiritual *rationale*, and the flower of its beauty. "Great is the mystery of godliness [which means here, not a rule of life but the fact of the Incarnation]; He was manifested in the flesh."[1]

3. The Incarnation under its form of sacrifice also throws a lurid light on the nature of sin as an essentially evil thing which had separated God and Man, and had made the unspeakable sacrifice necessary implied in Christ's Incarnation and Atonement. We have already

to say that this broad and effectual severance was necessary, not only for the old dispensation, but for the new; not only for the exclusion of idolatry in all its forms, but for the establishment of the Incarnation. A marriage would be no marriage unless the individuality of the parties to it were determinate and invincible. The Christian dogma of the two natures in one person would be in no sense distinctive if it had been habitual in the preparatory dispensation, as in some of the religions outside, for man properly so called to pass into proper Deity. Reunion was to be effected between the Almighty and His prime earthly creature by the bridge to be constructed over that flood, the flood of sin, which parted them; to sustain that bridge it was needful that the natures to be brought into union should stand apart like piers perfectly defined each on its own separate and solid foundation. And the firm foundations of those piers were laid to endure through all time by the creation story."

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 16.

discussed the question whether the Incarnation found its need simply and solely in the Fall. Here we would only point out that, whether this be so or not, the Incarnation does exhibit the sinfulness of humanity in an appalling light; and if the bare fact of Incarnation itself shows that, how much more emphatically does it do so when crowned by the Atonement! We can only see our wrongdoing aright in the blaze of the Divine redemption. That which could blight and destroy God's fairest blossom on the tree of life must be a dreadful and horrible canker. And that which made it necessary for God's Son to suffer and die in order to undo our shame and ruin, and stem the tide of destructive vengeance, must be an evil whose hidden potencies of wrong are beyond our deepest and highest imagination to conceive in their fulness. God would not descend from the serene heights of His blessed peace to stoop so low, were there no supreme and overmastering necessity. We have incidentally touched upon this aspect of the Atonement.[1]

We can now see a little more clearly how it is that the incarnate sacrifice of Jesus Christ helps to bring Man back to his true relationship to God, and start him once more on the path of upward Evolution. It was quite necessary that this should be done—that the lost relationship of filial union and love should be restored. For if with God is the fountain of life, if His loving presence is the soul's true atmosphere and environment, in which alone it can breathe and develop, then no real growth can take place without bringing Man back to God that His Spirit may energise within his heart. Without God Humanity is in the "winter of its discontent"; with Him, summer visits the soul, and he grows in grace like a flower in the

[1] Cf. p. 132.

sunshine. It is in the light of the idea of the Incarnation as thus bringing God and Man together, and restoring the Fatherly and filial relationship which is the condition of Spiritual Evolution, that the Atonement as a part of the process falls into line with the rest. Still, the Atonement only makes Spiritual Evolution possible. We must go to another aspect of Christ's work for the element that continues and completes this higher growth, which is to be found in His perfect example and His spiritual presence in the heart of the believer. To these questions let us next address ourselves.

"It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, conditions; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue but the highest incentive to its practice."

LECKY

Chapter IV.—The Ideal Man

Christ eludes all Human Categories—But He is the Ideal Man—Can the Claim be established?—Some Testimonies—The Universal, Ideal, and Perfect Type of Humanity—Realised in the "Fulness of the Times"—The "Embryonic Christ" of the Old Testament—Christ may be Divine and yet truly Human.

WE have considered the bearing of the Evolutionary Theory on the doctrine of the Atonement. Briefly, the mystery of the Cross of Christ restores that relationship between God and humanity which had been broken by the Fall. Our next task is to consider the further question how, the interrupted process of Spiritual Evolution being resumed, the Incarnation furnishes the type and the power whereby this may be carried to perfection. Where, in other words, are we to place the Man Christ Jesus in an Evolutionary Scheme of Theology?

I

It would be as well here frankly to state that in our view the Lord Jesus Christ is not to be classed in any human category. He stands aloof from all human classfications, unique and solitary in the perfect sinlessness and spiritual beauty of His life. This fact is often taken as proof that it is impossible to articulate the Person of Christ into any form of

evolutionary thought. He represents an impassable break in the continuity of human life, and brings intellectual confusion on those who would retain a belief in His moral perfection and Divine nature, and at the same time bring their thinking into line with the evolutionary tendencies of the time.

Our reply to this frequently asserted position is twofold.

First, it remains as a fact in the history of religious thought, that no one has succeeded in accounting for our Lord's life and character on the supposition that He was only the most perfect Man the world has hitherto seen, without doing hopeless violence to the facts of the case. Every attempt to bring Him into the category of human life pure and simple has failed to satisfy the conditions of the case. When the historians and the psychologists, the critics and the philosophers, have expended all their learning and their acumen on this task, the testimony of those who by faith have entered into the secret privileges of His communion and love, as well as the unique impression left by His personality on the minds of candid inquirers, remains unaccounted for. Jesus was either more than a man, or He was less than a good man. Here, again, there is an intractable element, which eludes all human theories, and baffles every attempt to bring it into line with a purely naturalistic scheme of thought.

Secondly, we affirm once more that the presence of a fresh factor in any series of evolutionary phenomena which cannot be expressed in terms of previous factors does not necessarily involve an impassable breach of continuity in the natural order. The reader is referred to pp. 26-34 of the Introduction for the elucidation of this point. We found there that there are several so-called "breaks" in the line of Evolution involving

the intrusion of fresh factors, which cannot, on the confession of all reputable thinkers, be analysed into the elements lying latent in the preceding facts. Life is irreducible into chemical formulae, consciousness into the consituents of vitality, self-consciousness into the psychological phenomena of consciousness, will into the resultant of conflicting motives. None the less are they facts, which, once they appear in germ, take their place in the enriched stream of Evolution without interfering with the perfect continuity of the order into which they have entered. Similarly, the fact that there was in the Person of our Lord a new element, which in Him for the first time mingled with the turbid current of human life, and started a fresh and higher line of Evolution, does not clash with the accepted canons of scientific thought, which has had to acknowledge similar "breaks" in the ascending series without being able to account for them, and which must accept Christ in all His uniqueness whether it can account for Him or not. The point for us here is to consider the function performed in the spiritual development of the race by Jesus Christ.

II

LET us first consider Him as the Ideal Man—the Crown and Goal of our perfected Humanity.

It was one of Plato's maxims that before the World came into being as a fact, it had a prior existence in the Divine Mind as an Idea. This Idea was no empty form, but a shaping principle. It was rather a creative Ideal than an Idea, and ensured its own fulfilment. The existent world is the bodying forth of this Primal Ideal in forms of matter under the conditions of space and time. But the embodiment of the Idea in actuality

is not a perfect, but only a partial embodiment of it. Matter is dead, lifeless ; it makes no contribution of its own to the process of development for which it furnishes the material. It is the same even with the organic world of plants and animals. They have no part in the evolving process which makes them what they are, except as passive instruments in the hands of their Maker, as He shapes them to His slowly realised purpose. But when we come to Man, we arrive for the first time at a being who can as it were take a share in his own development. In a word, he can conceive, and he can within limits *objectify, an idea,* and even to some extent *fulfil an ideal.* This distinction is of so radical a nature that it involves an entirely new start in Evolution. Formerly the developing force acted as it were from behind ; it was a pushing upward and onward. But with Man there is a new factor He is released from the law of necessity, he is free to choose, he is no longer merely *pushed,* but is *drawn* upward by the attractive power of the ideal that he sees before him. The centre of evolutionary influence is no longer simply without him ; it is also above him.

This power of forming and striving after an ideal, does not necessarily tend, let us remember, to the higher life of Man. For it is just as easy, and for a fallen and sinful being it is surely easier, to choose a false and unlovely ideal, than a high and holy one. And as a matter of fact, we do find that there is in men a tendency to shape out courses of conduct, and set before themselves objects of desire, of so destructive a nature, that when these are followed blindly they result in a degradation not so much bestial (for no beast can be so false to the true laws of its nature) as *infra*-bestial. The saddest and most tragic events in history have been due to the blind, foolish, and criminal following

of false ideals, for the accomplishment of which all considerations, however holy and tender and sacred, have been ruthlessly spurned or hopelessly forgotten. Taken in its widest significance, we may venture the assertion that there is nothing more important for the turning of the world back into the channels of its true development, than to imbue it with a high and worthy ideal, and to fill it with a holy love of that ideal.

There is no way so effectual of reaching this end as to present the world with a concrete ideal. The abstract notion of beauty is attractive only to the few, and holiness and love are often but a weariness to the flesh and the spirit, if viewed for long in their merely ideal relations, and dissociated from a personality. But a truly beautiful face never palls; a loving deed never grows stale; a holy character never becomes commonplace. When beautiful faces do pall, it is because some flaw is discovered which obtrudes itself more and more on the eye till it destroys the impression of the beauty; when a loving deed ceases to attract, it is because the hidden canker of selfishness is seen lurking within the heart of it, destroying its charm; and if a good man fails to commend his goodness to those around him, it is because it is lacking in some of the most attractive qualities of goodness, and so is not goodness unadulterated. It is of the very nature of perfect goodness, perfect beauty—physical or moral, and the physical is but a type and parable of the moral—and perfect love, to attach the mind and heart to themselves in glad and entire allegiance. Men are only too glad to worship when the Divinity appears. But most men, and all but the best men, cannot worship a Deity in the clouds; an abstract faith is impossible to them; their God must touch them with the warm breath of reality, and fill them with the sense of a personal

presence; then unless they are hopelessly given over to evil, they will respond more or less eagerly, and, falling at His feet, cry, "My Lord and my God." George Eliot says in one of her earlier books: "Ideas are often poor ghosts; our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them; they pass athwart us in their vapour, and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame."[1]

III

THE cry of the human heart has thus ever been, in thinking of the Ideal Man, "Oh that I might know where I might find Him!"—and the answer of Christianity is, that in Jesus Christ this Ideal is found. Whatever else He is, He is Man as God meant Man to be.

This is a great claim: can it be established?

One thing at least is quite clear and evident—this is the only claim that has ever won the serious assent of thoughtful and virtuous minds throughout all generations since His appearance on earth. There have been noble and heroic characters whose presence in the world has been a living fountain of inspiration in the direction of all that is high and good, and there have been a few whose personal presence has seemed to linger in the world long after their bodies have mouldered into dust.

[1] "Scenes of Clerical Life."

But as men's point of view has shifted, and their ideals have changed with the altered demands of the social and spiritual environment, the influence of one after another of the heroes and saints of the past has waned, their personalities have become obsolete, and, as Emerson once said, "every Hero becomes a bore at last." In one case only has this not been so. There is One who has never failed to hold His own in the minds of men, and when we remember that that place has ever been the *supreme* place, and that His demands on the allegiance of His followers have been as absolute as they could have been made, the wonder of this fact increases. Since He lived—an obscure and almost unknown Man in a provincial district, and surrounded by a narrow and parochial environment—almost everything has changed. But "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever"; amidst the flux of the ages He stands supreme, and He has succeeded in establishing, apparently for ever, the final type of Manhood and Woman hood in one.

This is not a matter of opinion, asserted by those who call themselves by His name, while it is disallowed by all others. Listen to a few of the tributes that have been uttered by those who do not make or allow any claim to be called Christians. Renan, among many recurrent eulogies that are scattered over his perfumed pages, evidently springing as involuntary exclamations of admiration out of his very heart, says, "Whatever may be the unlooked-for phenomena of the future, Jesus will not be surpassed." Strauss, in assailing the authenticity of the Gospels, yet bows reverently before Him "in whom the Divine Wisdom first developed itself, as a power determining His whole life and being." Rathbone Greg confesses Jesus to have been "the wisest and noblest of the Sons of men whom God has raised

up with special gifts and for special work." Goethe says concerning Christ: "If I am asked whether it is in my nature to pay Him reverence, I say certainly! I bow before Him as a Divine manifestation of the highest principle of morality." Theodore Parker, the Unitarian, says: "In Him as in a mirror we may see the image of God, and go on from glory to glory, till we are changed into the same image." Lecky, in his ablest book, refers to "that ideal character presented to the world in Christianity, which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love." And Carlyle speaks of Him as "Our highest Orpheus, whose Sphere-melody, flowing in wild, native tones, took captive the ravished souls of men, and still modulates and Divinely leads them." Schiller declares holiness to be the supreme thing for Man, and that it stands incarnate for all time in Christ. Finally—though these testimonies might be indefinitely multiplied—Jean Paul Richter hails Him as "the mightiest among the holy, and the holiest among the mighty, who lifted with His pierced hands empires off their hinges, turned the stream of time into new channels, and still governs all the ages."

The life of Jesus is thus the paradox of history. It may briefly be described in these three antitheses.

1. It is the presentation of a character *universal* in its type, and yet appealing irresistibly to *individual* men as their own example.

This is a marvel which becomes greater the more we consider it. It is the natural result of a widening generalisation that it loses definition and clearness of outline the more its scope enlarges. The more abstract an idea, the less affinity it has with particulars. And we might have expected that as an ideal character became universal in its scope, the less would it appeal to

individuals. We need a local element in our heroes in order to feel the full fascination of their call to a higher life. And speaking from an *a priori* point of view, we should confidently say that to ask for a Man who would become the universal type of Manhood for all men in all parts of the earth, and in all ages, would be to ask for an impossibility. Amid the many differences that exist among men, there are some so divergent and incompatible with one another, that we should at once declare the demand to be an absurd and unphilosophical one. "No single man could ever be a pattern for all men" would surely be our final dictum.

But what are the facts regarding the place of Jesus in the world's estimation? It is unquestionable that He has appealed to the whole of the civilised world, and indeed to all the *un*civilised world in so far as His claims have been brought before it, as the One Man who combines in Himself the essential qualities of Manhood. As it has been well put by a recent writer: "Here then is the central unquestionable miracle—Jesus Himself—that is, one from the cradle to the grave, walking in spotless purity, through all temptation wearing a conscience without a stain, His personality free from every element that is either Jewish, or Greek, or Roman, embracing every type of manhood, and not only of manhood, but also of womanhood; equally at home with the saints on the Mount of Transfiguration or with the sinners bowed at the base; manifesting every characteristic of the True and the Beautiful and the Good; charged with unfaltering wisdom, yet full of the healing mercies that pass no sorrow by; elect to wipe away the tears of humanity, and to place it redeemed and enfranchised among the sanctities of Heaven."[1] The character of Jesus reminds one of a

[1] "Pillars of the Faith," p. 189.

saying concerning Helen of Troy, whose beauty was of so universal a type that all men who looked at her felt as though they were related to her. So do men feel related to Jesus, for He combines in Himself all those universal qualities which they instinctively recognise as the contents of their better self.

2. Another antithesis may be put thus: Jesus has achieved the miracle of *actualising the Ideal.*

We speak loosely sometimes of having seen an "ideal picture," or having read an "ideal poem," or having looked at an "ideal face," but this only covers our conviction that the Ideal is something that can never be actually realised in time and space. It is the language of compliment, and not of sincere conviction, when our eulogies take the above shape. There is no painter or poet or sculptor or musician but will freely confess that his conceptions far and away exceed his power of performance. What he dreams of in his inspired moments is a very different thing from what he actually achieves in his working hours. The poet's fine frenzy is already dying into ashes before his lines take shape, and the painter's colours will never limn for us the "light that never was on land or sea" which he has seen in his hours of rapt inspiration, nor will his hand perform the perfect curves that his mind can conceive. If this is so with the artistic faculty, we may be sure it is far more true of the moral Ideal, and its capacity of being embodied in human life. "The good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do," is the sorrowful confession of the complete inability of our common clay to rise into the region of the ideal life as witnessed to by one of the best of men.

Here again the unique place of Jesus is recognised. It is in itself a fact that has never been fairly faced by those who refuse to acknowledge His claims to

Divine honours, that in spite of the otherwise universal fact of imperfection, here is one who does not seem ever to have realised the sense of sin, who yet commands the complete admiration and homage of all true men. Epictetus was once asked if it were possible to be faultless, and he answered, "No, it is impossible; this only is possible, to endeavour to be faultless." In this saying the philosopher revealed his own greatness and humility. But what shall we say to the Christ, as He stands before the ages, and, in tones that would be unspeakably arrogant did they not carry conviction with them, boldly asks, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" He stands thus before us as the Ideal Man made actual—a miracle indeed!

3. Once more: the character of Christ combines the otherwise incompatible qualities of being both *perfect* and *imitable*.

The nearer to our own level the character of our favourite is, the easier it must be to imitate and re-embody. Conversely, the higher above us our ideal looms, the harder it must be to attain to it. And the great difficulty one feels in choosing his models in every department of life lies in this, that the more perfect they are, the more impossible of realisation they must be, while the more easy it is to reach them, the less is it worth our while to do so. Perfection and imitability are seen thus to be antipodal qualities.

If, on the other hand, we look into the story of Christian heroism and achievement in every direction, we shall be struck with the strange fact that the One who has fired men to the highest holiness of character, is just the One of all others who has impressed the world with His own unapproachable grandeur and perfection of nature. No one has ever reached the height at which He stands and yet the best men have tried to do so

for the very reason that He is so high and so holy. His beauty of character is so convincing that it has charmed the word "impossible" out of the Christian vocabulary. When Iole was asked how it was that she knew that Hercules was a god, she replied: "Because I was satisfied with him the moment my eyes fell on him. When I beheld Theseus and the other heroes, I desired that they might engage in a chariot-race, or at least in a foot-race, that I might see which of them was the doughtiest; but when I beheld Hercules, he conquered whether he walked, or sat, or whatever else he did, and so I knew him for a god." Even so has the vision of the Christ made men feel that here was one who was God in His perfection of character, and who yet has brought perfection so near to us, and made it so fascinating and winsome in its gentle compulsion, that we are drawn into an involuntary emulation of the impossible, and an earnest pursuit of the inimitable.

The question may well be asked, Whence came this unique and astonishing personality? Is it an ideal conception which had no objective existence outside the fond imaginations of His adoring followers? On this point we have the frank admissions of John Stuart Mill and others, whose testimony is all the more valuable in that it did not come from the pens of professed followers. The former says, speaking of the portrait of Christ in the Gospels, that the inventor would be even more wonderful than the hero. And with that candour that was one of the most remarkable of his many noble qualities he says: "Who among His disciples, or among their proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings attributed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idio-

syncrasies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that all the good which was in them was all derived, as they always professed that it was derived—from the higher source."[1] The only explanation of this miraculous character in history is that it actually existed. "THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH."

IV

CHRIST therefore was the Ideal Man made known to the world in the course of history, in order that men might see for themselves the possibilities of their nature realised in a concrete and most lovable personality. But a pertinent question rises here, suggested as it is by the analogies of Nature's Evolutionary processes—*Ought not the Ideal to be realised at the end and not during the course of the Evolution?*

In the organic world, it is quite true that the ideal could not come anywhere but at the end of the pathway of development. The material universe works up to a goal that cannot by any possibility be attained except through the gradual accumulation of small differences that are in the true line of Evolution, these differences being so many microscopic steps towards the attainment of the ultimate goal. The pathway, as we have seen, is a narrow one, and few there be that find it. It can indeed only be reached by the fortunate creature in which are added the final touches, not by its own virtue and effort, but because it happens to be the instrument of Nature's final triumph. It is thus a purely mechanical fact, encompassed by the iron band of physical necessity.

[1] "Essays on Religion," by J. S. Mill.

But there is a different law of Evolution in the mental and moral, from that which obtains in the physical, world. Here the presiding Mind that directs the course of ascending life is capable of receiving assistance from, or of being hindered by, the creature that is being evolved. In other words, there is a new factor present, which is "the conscious, voluntary co-operation of the human spirit in the work of its own evolution." In the case of organic Evolution the animal is at the mercy of spontaneous internal changes, and of mechanical outward, or environal, changes. In human Evolution the creature is in a sense a part of its own environment. The animal knows not whither it is tending, nor whether it be tending anywhere. Man knows not only his past course, but can imagine his future. That is to say, he can conceive an ideal, can feel its attractive power, can strive to attain to it. It is thus a real part of his progress that he should have the true Ideal before his eyes. Only thus will he be able to evolve as he ought. Just as truly, therefore, as we should naturally expect that the ideal in the organic world should come at the end of the process, so may we expect that, in the case of a creature like Man, the fit place for the revelation of an Ideal that shall be the goal of all spiritual endeavour in the future must come during the course of the process.

But does not this suggest that it ought to come *at the very beginning* of the process of distinctively human Evolution?

No. For the power of conceiving, and still more of being attracted by, an ideal is not the feature that appears, or *could* appear, early in the story of humanity. There was much unconscious mental, and more unconscious moral, Evolution to be got through before Man could gain anything from the contemplation of

the Christ as the Ideal Man. It argues a nature that has reached a considerable elevation in the scale of mental development to be able to recognise so high a fact; and it argues a moral receptivity not to be attained without long and trying discipline. To bring the Ideal into the world therefore before the time—that is, the moment when Man would be ripe to receive and profit by so Divine a gift—would be to cast pearls before swine. The Messiah must come "in the fulness of time," if His work was to be well and effectually done. He must become a part of History, and take His place in the line of human development as an integral part thereof; and so by an impression of reality that could be gained in no other way, make Himself One with the humanity whom He came to redeem and sanctify.[1] "At the end, the whole human race, drawn upward by this ideal, must reach the fulness of the stature of Christ."[2]

Assuming that Christ is the Ideal in question, we can now better understand why it was that He appeared in the world just when He did, and not earlier or later in the history of the race. It was simply because then was the "appointed time"—appointed, that is, not by the arbitrary will of an irresponsible Deity, but by the conditions essential to the successful performance of His gracious mission. The world was ready for Him when He came: if He had come sooner there would be lacking one of the most striking features of His earthly career—the sense He gives of having arrived at the exact moment when His presence was most to be desired; if He had come later, the more we study history, the more clearly we shall feel that the

[1] See A. B. Bruce's "Apologetics, or Christianity Defensively Considered," p. 412.

[2] Ullmann, "Die Sündlosigkeit Jesu," p. 159 quoted by Bruce).

golden hour would have been missed. "So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."[1]

V

THERE is another fact connected with the appearance of the Son of God as the Ideal of humanity that deserves our attention. Though He did not appear in the world till the fulness of the ages, He had been expected for many centuries, and His coming had been heralded in many ways. In the earliest pages of Inspired Writ, we find that the pronouncing of the curse over doomed humanity was brightened by the mysterious promise of the seed that should bruise the serpent's head;[2] and whether we look at this as the fruit of an early or a late period of the Old Testament religious consciousness, it was at any rate sufficiently remote from the time of Christ's appearance to be a true prophetic indication of Some One to come who should undo the grievous consequences of sin. But right through the Old Testament there are premonitory symptoms of the same fact. Abraham in some dim and perhaps feeble way saw the day of Christ and "rejoiced."[3] "Others of the world's grey fathers commune or wrestle with an unknown shade, the prophetic semblance of the coming One who should tread the Judaean hills. Anon the great Levitical system, with its wealth of type and shadow, all relating to the Redeemer, rolls in cloud-like majesty before us; while

[1] Gal. iv. 3-5. [2] Gen. iii. 15. [3] John viii. 56.

the inspired prophets pour forth those marvellous predictions concerning Him which are the perpetual miracle of history. Then the sufferings and glory of the expected Messiah are set to more than mortal music in the Psalms; and, finally, the records of the Old Testament are closed with a series of predictions so clear and so definite that they declare the pen of the seer to be God-guided."[1]

This wonderful and quite unique fact deserves more than a passing notice from us, since we are considering the bearings of the law of Evolution on Christian Theology, for here if anywhere their spheres intersect. The coming Christ is so plainly to be foreseen in the Old Testament dreams and prophecies and visions, that those who reject the belief that Christ came in order that Scripture might be fulfilled, *i.e.* in order that the plan of salvation forecasted in that book or rather series of books might be fulfilled, have yet to give a satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon of prophecy. The reader will perhaps permit us to quote here two passages from the writings of thinkers who in many respects represent antithetic schools of thought, but who in this point are absolutely at one.

Bishop Alexander, in a recent volume of sermons, speaking as he does for the advanced Anglicans, writes as follows: "Line by line that lengthened epic, of which the Messiah was the subject, was written. Believers in their zeal may have occasionally written their own meaning in, and *forced* a Christian reference where it was not designed. But, after all deductions, the poem remains complete, and the image of the Hero can never be volatilised away by the ingenuity of critical objection. Here and there the hints may be ambiguous, and the interpretation obscure; but, ever

[1] "Pillars of the Faith," p. 198.

and anon, some one arises and 'teaches in song what he has learned in sorrow.' David wails forth some anguish in the twenty-second Psalm, the like of which in its fulness none but One has ever known. Isaiah describes in vision the form which John saw on Calvary. Or, varying the figure, we may call prophecy a picture growing on the canvas stroke by stroke. Sometimes centuries elapse between one touch and the next, which could only have been given by the hand of a heaven-born painter. Slowly, but surely, was the picture drawn, the crucifixion depicted: yet not the mere crucifixion as a single painting. High over the Cross is a living form that floats in glory. Round the representation of the Crucified are the likenesses of the Ascension and the Judge upon His throne. And all this was shaped out, not on canvas or in stone, but in deathless words, and then expressed by the living God in human flesh and in a human life. 'All the things that are written by the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of Man.'"[1]

The other writer referred to is Dr. R. F. Horton, who speaks as the representative of the liberal wing of the Nonconformists, in his work on "Revelation and the Bible": "The broad historic development of Israel very obviously leads up to Christ, and all the institutions of the Law and of the Congregation point to that marvellous spiritual completion; the modes of thought, the expectations, the aspirations of Israel's thinkers and prophets no less clearly prognosticate the great Person that is to be; these historical and spiritual elements of Revelation even a careless reader will find it difficult to miss if he studies the Old Testament in the light of the New. But there is something more curious still: how comes it that one story after another in the narrative parts of the Old Testament lends itself

[1] "Verbum Crucis," pp. 95, 96. (See Luke xviii. 31.)

to a typological treatment, so that the events are, as St. Paul would say, *ἀλληγορούμενα*—allegories of things which were realised centuries later? . . . And when this typical significance of events and names and persons is carried on through century after century of a national literature, in ways which no human foresight or wisdom could possibly have devised, so that a Christian taking up the Old Testament with Christ as the key finds in his hands a series of pictures, as it were, all representing with outline more or less distinct, and with colours more or less harmonised, the Lord whom he has learnt to know, is it not plain that we are face to face with a mysterious element of Revelation which we must constantly bear in mind and honestly seek to explain?"[1]

We are persuaded that no Science will account for this apart from a belief that here is something which is not of earth but of heaven. But for all that, it is not incapable of being expressed in Evolutionary terms The whole phenomena of prophecy and typology may be classed or at least compared with those of lower Sciences in this way. The foreshadowings of the Coming Redeemer are a kind of Embryonic Christ, heralding and giving pledge of what shall in the fulness of time appear in the flesh. The very centuries were in labour and travail with the Son of God who was also the Son of Man, and when the period of gestation was complete, the womb of Time brought forth the "First-born of every creature."

VI

BUT it will perhaps be objected that the Ideal Man as seen in Jesus Christ is not a true example for us,

[1] "Revelation and the Bible," pp. 20-22. Julia Wedgwood's chapter on "The Unity of a Type" in her "Message of Israel" finely illustrates the same truth (*q.v.*).

because He is more than Man, being also the Son of God.

This is a difficulty which has been present in the minds of Christians from the beginning; but it is felt now as never before, because a more vivid impression of the actual personality of our Saviour has come home to the devout Christian consciousness than in any other age. It would seem that in order to be an Ideal for us, He must not only be Man, but that He must be *only* a Man. The Deity of Christ seems to take away from us just what is most precious in His Humanity—His example.

But this difficulty is only formidable when a theory of the relations between His Divine and Human Nature is formed *a priori*. This is just what has been done by most thinkers who have held the ear of the world throughout the centuries. But in these latter days we are beginning to look at this, like other subjects, from an *a posteriori* point of view. And then the worst elements of the difficulty pass away.

Whatever may be the substratum of mystery that looms beyond the reach of analysis in the mental and spiritual conditions of our Lord's life on earth, it is clear that the New Testament writers did not feel this difficulty as we do.[1] They all seem to be completely unconscious of it. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Him as in all essential matters on a level with us. "Wherefore it behoved Him *in all things* to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

[1] Cf. Fairbairn, however ("Christ in Modern Theology," p. 354): "To the Evangelists the most miraculous thing in Christ was His determination not to be miraculous, but to live our ordinary life amidst struggles and in the face of temptations that never ceased."

For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."[1] Elsewhere the same writer says, "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."[2] Peter in one of the most impressive passages of his First Epistle puts the same thought a little less clearly, but it is the same in substance: "For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth,"[3] etc. In these and many other passages there is clearly no sense of the difficulty which we so often feel and express, and it is manifest that we have in some way imported it into the facts rather than found it there.

It would be well then to ask, what were the conditions under which our Lord was able to become a true example to us who are real men and women, and no more?

We shall, we think, find the solution of this difficulty in a more frank acceptance of the Humanity of our Lord. He became *Man*, and He submitted Himself to the limitations of our Humanity in a far truer sense than many of us, in our mistaken desire to defend His Divinity, are willing to allow. When Christ laid aside His Divine Majesty, and "humbled Himself," He did so in a real, and not merely in a metaphorical sense. He subjected Himself to the conditions of finite and temporal existence as truly from freewill as we have to do from necessity. We have all been accustomed to think of Him as being pent up in a body, moving about in the same way as we do, undergoing the common experiences of the body, such as hunger and thirst, weariness and depression, elation and restfulness. Except on certain occasions

[1] Heb. ii. 17, 18. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 15. [3] 1 Peter ii. 21, 22.

when He had some kind and unselfish purpose to perform, He never took advantage of His superhuman powers to release Himself from the ordinary restrictions and fatigues of our physical condition. All this has always been acknowledged, as indeed must be done unless the most wanton violence be done to the meaning of the Gospels.

But when we approach the higher question of mental limitations, most readers of the New Testament act as though its language really meant something different from what it seems to mean. The expressions used to describe the mental and spiritual conditions of our Saviour's human life are understood in a non-natural manner ; all suggestion of any real limitation that may be found in His modes of thought, and any hint that He was subject to the same spiritual restrictions as ourselves, are discounted, and the texts denoting such ideas explained in a way that would never be applied to other texts without taking out the marrow from the Gospel. This is a relic of mediaeval Theology which it is time to discard. In its over-anxiety to secure the Divine nature of Christ from being half-acknowledged, it lost hold of His real Humanity. Jesus could not have been ignorant of anything, for He was God ; He could therefore never have come to know what He did not know before ; He could never have experienced a break in His realisation of the Divine presence : and when athwart the course of such abstract argument certain isolated texts threw their awkward shadow, such as " Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not even the Son " [1]—" He grew in wisdom " [2]—" He cried, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? " [3]—alternative explanations were suggested which did not interpret the mystery, but simply contradicted each other. What shall

[1] Matt. xxiv. 36. [2] Luke ii. 52. [3] Matt. xxvii. 46.

we say of men who thought that they were honouring God by asserting that in these expressions it is not meant that He really grew in wisdom, but that He only *seemed* to grow; that when He said He did not know, He meant only that He would not tell; that when He cried out that He was desolate, He was never really deprived of the consolations of His Father's presence?

The passages which state or imply that there were real limitations to the earthly personality of our Lord are too numerous to be explained away; and to do so is to lose, in our opinion, one of the most fruitful sources of consolation in the Gospel. It is clearly revealed that as a child He grew, not only physically, but mentally and spiritually. He received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost at the Jordan.[1] He was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness."[2] His miraculous power was clearly held in fief from the Father, and depended, at times at any rate, on conditions beyond His own control. John teaches that at least in some of His miracles His power was dependent on a direct answer to prayer.[3] Then we are told that He expressed surprise, *e.g.* at the conduct of His parents, at the unbelief as well as at the unusual faith of certain men, at the barrenness of the fig-tree, at the slowness of His disciples' spiritual perception and trust.[4] At times He asked for information and acknowledged its receipt.[5] And when we come to the closing scenes of His passion and death, we are irresistibly struck with the strange mingling of a Divine loftiness of mind with the saddest and most human grief, and woe, and weakness, that have ever been limned before the eyes of men. It was only because the future was

[1] Matt. iii. 16.
[2] *Ibid.*, iv. 1.
[3] John xi. 41: cf. Matt. xiv. 19.
[4] Luke ii. 49; Mark vi. 6, iv. 40, viii. 18, viii. 21, xiv. 37.
[5] John xi. 34, xxi. 5, etc., etc.

not clear that He could pray : "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me."[1] Boldly simple is the language of the inspired commentator on this scene of agony : "Christ," he says, "in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and having been heard for His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet *learned obedience* by the things which He suffered."[2] No language less than this would correspond with the historic narrative, but it is language that very clearly expresses the exercise of human faith in our Lord's case ; nor is it possible that He could have cried with real meaning on the cross, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" unless He had really entered into the experience which prompted the cry of the Psalmist, into the trial of the soul from whom God hides His face, the trial of the righteous man forsaken.[3]

Without dwelling longer on the evidence of this undoubted fact,—explain it as we may,—let us try to gather up from our own special point of view the broad lines of limitation to which, in a very real sense, our Lord subjected Himself while on earth, in order that He might not only be a faithful high priest, but also a perfect exemplar to us.

He was subject to all the restrictions of mind and body that were necessary to the full bearing of the burden of our human probation and the educative influence of the earthly environment of human life. His mission dawned on Him slowly and gradually ; He was capable of being tempted to be unfaithful to it ; human and bodily weakness sometimes made the burden of His mission an almost intolerable pain to

[1] Matt. xxvi. 39.
[2] Heb. v. 7, 8.
[3] See Gore's Bampton Lecture on this whole subject, esp pp. 147–150; also "Studies of the Mind in Christ," by T. Adamson, B.A.

Him; and as a means of solving His many hard trials, He depended on just the sources of strength and consolation that are open to us who are His followers. It is true that there was behind all this human sense of weakness—at least at times, for the *consciousness* of Deity was apparently an intermittent, or, at least, a variable factor in His experience—an occasional conviction that He might have drawn on infinite resources of succour and help had He chosen so to do,[1] but He never exercised this; and it would scarcely be argued by any one that the knowledge of His Divinity in this way was any bar to the perfect action of His humanity, for it was realised only in order to refuse to use it, so making His self-abnegation more complete and touching. There was no trial to which we are prone that He was not also open to feel and measure in all its fulness. And above all, the way in which He overcame all temptations, all trials, all weaknesses, all the heritage of frailty which He received with His human body, was the simple and yet often—to us—hard method of depending wholly on the presence and succour and strength of His Heavenly Father. "He Himself says, that He accomplishes whatsoever the Father taught Him; that He does what He sees the Father doing; that the Father makes to Him a progressive revelation [cf. "He shall show Him greater works than these"]; that the Father 'gave Him' the Divine name, *i.e.* the positive revelation of Himself, to communicate to the Apostles; that He has made known to them all things that He had heard of the Father, or the words which the Father had given Him."[2] And in all the crises of His earthly career, we find that He turned to His Father for guidance, for refreshment, and for the power to heal and work miracles, just as

[1] Matt. xxvi. 53. [2] Gore, p. 49.

naturally as a flower turns to the sunlight. He lived "in the Father," as the Father lived "in Him"; and this flawless friendship and perfect understanding was meant not merely to illustrate a mystic union between the first and second Persons in the Trinity which is far above our own attainment, but that relation of perfect sympathy between humanity on earth and the Fatherhood in heaven, which is open to all who will avail themselves of the unfathomable resources of redeeming grace.[1]

Viewed then as the typical perfect and sinless Man, Jesus Christ was none the less human because He was Divine. For in order to present us with the vision of what we ought to be, He verily became Man. In the fulness of time the Ideal was made manifest; the "Word was made flesh"; He dwelt among us; we beheld His glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And *He grew.* This is the point at which our inquiry takes a vital hold of the doctrine of His Person. He Himself was

[1] On this most difficult but all-important matter, the following words from one of our foremost theologians will commend themselves: "If Christ in His historical life be conceived as a conscious God who lives and speaks like a limited man, then the worst of all forms of docetism is affirmed. For it is one that dissolves Him into infinite unreality. If He knows as God while He speaks as man, then His speech is not true to His knowledge. . . . If He had such knowledge, how could He remain silent as He faced human ignorance and saw reason wearied with the burden of all its unintelligible mysteries? If men could believe that once there lived upon this earth One who had all the knowledge of God, yet declined to turn any part of it into science for man, would they not feel their faith in His goodness taxed beyond endurance? Is not much of the modern impatience of theology a just Nemesis upon systems that have in this matter wronged Him they professed to interpret?" Then in a footnote: "Christ recognises the limitations of His own knowledge (Mark xiii. 32: cf. xiv. 35, 36)." Again, "The physical limitations really represent the transcendent obligations imposed by His work upon His will" (Fairbairn's "Christ in Modern Theology," p. 353).

the subject of a spiritual Evolution. Just as we are told that the embryo recapitulates in the preliminary stages of the individual life the whole history of its race, so we may reverently say that, in the stages of growth of the perfect life as seen in Jesus from the cradle to the cross, we see the pathway that would have been followed by the race if, instead of falling into sin, it had retained its innocence and gone on to perfection. In that case there would have been limitations; there would have been growth; there would have been a gradual Evolution from a partial and incomplete life to a glorious and perfect one, like the growth of the bud into the flower. *But there would have been no sin;* and in that wide difference we have the whole story of the actual as opposed to the ideal course of Man. If we study the childhood of Christ as it is scantily sketched out for us, we have a picture of the true pathway that ought to have been followed by humanity in its earlier and prehistoric career; and if we study His later life, we shall see not only what we ourselves ought to be individually, but also what the race might be in its relations to God and to its constituent members.

Book III: Evolution and the Resurrection

"A belief in the Resurrection of our Lord is not indeed the solution (for that we cannot gain), but the illumination of the mysteries of life: in this fact the apparent contradictions of the immensity and insignificance of the individual are harmonised: in this lies an end to which pre-Christian history converged, a spring from which post-Christian history flows: in this man finds the only perfect consecration of his entire nature: in this there is contained a promise for the future which removes, so far as may be, the sense of isolation which belongs to our finite nature, and unites the world to the absolute and eternal: in this, to sum up all briefly, we may contemplate Christianity in relation to history, to man, and to the future, not as a vague idea, or as a set of dogmas, or even as a system, but as a witness to actual events in the substantial reality of which lies all its power and all its hope."

WESTCOTT, *The Gospel of the Resurrection.*

"Christ's Resurrection was not a temporary reversal of the laws of sin and death, but a permanent supersession of them by a higher law in which mortality was swallowed up of life."

D. W. FORREST.

BOOK III

EVOLUTION AND THE RESURRECTION

Chapter I.—The Risen Christ

How the Incarnation is transformed by the Resurrection—The latter an Objective Historical Fact—The Reward of the Perfect Obedience of the Son—The Type of the Glorified Humanity—The Pledge of Personal Immortality for Believers.

I

SO far we have dealt with that aspect of the Incarnation which is centred in the earthly life of Jesus Christ, and bounded by His atoning death on the Cross. We now come to a more universal aspect, and, leaving behind us the merely temporary aspects of the earthly appearing of the Son of God, we rise to a point of view from which the Incarnation is seen as a spiritual world-process which is in the highest sense Evolutionary in its character.

Those who would limit the life and work of our Lord to the power of His example as the typical Man, to the wonderful elevation and universality of His teaching, to the inspiring influence of His ideas of Man, of God, and of social progress through the law of Love and Goodwill among Men, and who bring the sinless life He led to an end at the grave of Joseph of Arimathea, part company here with the distinctively Christian conception, and with the faith of Eighteen Centuries. It is as far wide of the mark to say that this makes no practical difference, as it is to say that it altogether

removes all the truth revealed to the world through Christ from the grasp of mankind. There is a sense in which the work of our Lord is entirely independent of the consciousness of men. The Godward aspect of the Atonement would be as fully operative without the faith and acceptance of mankind. It concerns the internal relations that exist within the Blessed Trinity. As a matter of fact we know nothing positive as to its nature; it seems impossible to come to a common consent as to its meaning; what we seem able to say about it is mostly of a negative character; we can tell what it does not mean, and reject the crude generalisations that have been made concerning it by one theological school and another; but the theory of the Atonement which is able to commend itself to all thoughtful Christians as reasonable and satisfactory has yet to be discovered. And this shows that clear thinking about this mystery was not meant to be attained in order to realise that practical side of the subject which is turned to our human vision. A man may be largely at sea on this point, and yet be a devout and earnest Christian. For he may be unable to explain the bearings of the Sacrifice on the Cross on the mind and heart of God, and yet by faith and love lay hold of Christ as his personal Saviour.[1] The love of Christ may constrain him; he may feel the ineffable truth that in Him his sins are all atoned for and pardoned, thus reaching peace and joy in believing; he may live in Him and for Him; and still be unable to give anything like a consistent and intelligible notion of what Christ did on Calvary in order to make it possible

[1] To affirm the contrary is to make a purely rationalistic statement; though this is often done by some extreme representatives of the "orthodox" Evangelical school, who practically make an acceptance of the substitutionary and "legal" theory of the Atonement a condition of salvation.

for God to forgive sin. All that many are able to do in this matter is to fall back on the words of Scripture, and, basing their faith on what is there said, accept the fact that "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And if it is non-essential that we should be able to give a clear definition to this doctrine or article of faith in order to enter into its fruits, it follows, conversely, that though we did not know anything of the fact at all, we should not for that reason be altogether debarred from the benefits of it. "The very substance of the Christian Gospel is a declaration that the reason of God's forgiveness of human sin is in God Himself, not in Man; in Christ the Eternal Son of God, not in ourselves; it is a declaration, not merely of the infinite love of God, for there may be love where moral resentment remains, and where moral resentment is active; but, as Paul puts it, the preachers of the Gospel are the heralds of God sent to proclaim to nations in revolt that God is at peace with them; at peace with them that are afar off; at peace with them that are nigh; at peace, not with the penitent merely, but with the impenitent; not with the devout Christian merely, but with those who do not yet believe in Christ; at peace with all mankind."[1]

Is there then no need that this redemption be known in order that its benefits be realised? Not that *some* of its benefits be realised; but it is necessary that it be known in order that *all the incalculable benefits dependent on faith* be appropriated. The atheist does not lose all the benefits of the being of God, for he is in possession of life and all its blessings; but he loses all the benefits of a knowledge of and a belief in God.[2]

[1] Dale, "Fellowship with Christ, and other Sermons," p. 332.
[2] See a suggestive essay by R. H. Hutton in his Theological Essays, on "The Moral Significance of Atheism."

And it is ordained that, in order that the Atonement should do its saving work on the soul, men should believe. For salvation in the fullest sense is a process depending on the relations between Man and his Saviour; and in order that it may come to perfection, the two must enter consciously into these relations.

In what then do these relations consist? Is it enough that we should know that Christ came into the world, lived an ideal life, died an atoning death, and was buried? Is it enough to know through the Gospel story that God is willing, because of what Christ did on Calvary, to forgive sin, and that now we have nothing to do save to believe that and follow Him as our great Type and Exemplar?

If this were all, then it would after all amount to but little. We should still be left to our own resources in endeavouring to live out the Divine Life; and hampered as we are by our common heritage of evil, and by our constitutional weaknesses and "besetting sins," we should not be able to attain even to the fringe of the pure and holy ideal. In looking at the fair outlines of that gracious and beautiful life, and comparing with it our own attainments at their best, our cry must be that of the poet,—

> "O snows so pure, O peaks so high!
> I shall not reach you till I die!"

What men need is not only a Saviour who shall make it possible for God to forgive sin, and who shall leave behind Him as He passes into the dark portal of death the fragrance of Divinest purity and holiness, saying, as the echo of His voice dies in the far-off ages, "This is the Way, walk ye therein!" but a Saviour who shall be a present friend and brother, infusing into His followers His own grace and beauty and holiness

by direct contact and the breath of spirit on spirit. If we have to look back into the gathering shadows of so many centuries for our Christ, and find Him only in Galilee and Jerusalem, we shall miss the inmost heart of the Gospel. Those who lived with Him and came into the vitalising atmosphere of His presence might have been able to catch the inspiration needful to follow the high path; but who is there who can depend on such far-off stimulus for the power that shall transform him into the likeness of the Son of God?

Let those who can supply the answer. For ourselves we believe that the Man who lived and passed away is not the Saviour whom we know and love. The Christ of History is not merely the Christ of Calvary and the Grave in the Garden. HE IS THE RISEN AND REGNANT CHRIST.

II

ONCE more, we must decline to enter into the question of Christian Evidences. We assume the act of the Resurrection of our Lord to be a historic fact substantially as it is given in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. It is our business to view it in relation to the Theory of Evolution; or, rather, to show its unquestionable Evolutionary significance.

And first, let us consider the Resurrection of Christ as an *objective fact.*

Our Lord is distinctly spoken of as having risen from the dead in a real objective sense. He did not appear to His disciples as a disembodied spirit. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have," were His own significant words on this point as He spoke with His disciples.[1] "Reach hither thy finger, and see My hands;

[1] Luke xxiv. 39.

and reach hither thy hand, and put it in My side: and be not faithless, but believing," was His appeal to a sceptical follower, in proof at once of His personal identity and of His "corporeal" reality.[1] The body which He had after His resurrection was the same as that with which He walked about the streets of Jerusalem and trod the vales of Galilee. "The Lord is risen *indeed*, and hath appeared to Simon."[2] There is abundant evidence of the impression of both identity and "corporeality" in the Resurrection Body of Jesus; so that His disciples, *i.e.* those who knew Him best, and could not possibly be deceived by any fancied resemblance between Him and a pretender who might have personified Him, were left in no manner of doubt that He was the Jesus whom they had known and loved during His earthly life.

This being clearly understood, it must be as clearly noted that the Resurrection Body of our Lord was in some striking respects different from that which He had before His death on Calvary. Identical in a sense it undoubtedly was, and equally certain is it that it was different in some of its qualities. In the Gospel of John there is a remarkable passage in which these two points are illustrated. It is that to which notice is drawn above.[3] A verse or two before our Lord is represented as asking Thomas to reach forth his hand and his fingers for the purpose of testing His identity, it is said, "Jesus cometh, the doors *being shut*, and stood in the midst,"[4] which is the second time that express mention is made of this fact.[5] The difference is so great that in one case, at least, those who had known Him well during His former life failed to know Him

[1] John xx. 27.
[2] Luke xxiv. 34.
[3] John xx. 27.
[4] John xx. 26.
[5] *Ibid.*, verse 19.

till He had revealed Himself through a characteristic act,—that of blessing the bread which the disciples were about to eat,[1]—and this though He had been walking and talking with them for some time. He seems to have exercised the power of appearing to, and disappearing from, His disciples at will,[2] and to be able to pass from one place to another in a more rapid manner than by the ordinary means of locomotion. He is never spoken of as being subject to bodily feelings of fatigue and weariness, or of hunger and thirst; though He is, strangely enough, represented, on one occasion at least, as eating before (not with) His disciples.[3] The bearing of the Master with His followers is also quite different from the old familiar though dignified manner of His earthly intercourse. He refuses the caress offered to Him by Mary Magdalene in her wild joy at finding that He was really alive;[4] and though He acts differently with Thomas, it is for a special reason which is distinctly stated. "He no longer accompanied His disciples, as He had been wont to do, on their journeys, but sent them forth alone, and met them at the close; . . . and when He came in contact with them, there was a mysteriousness in His bearing, and a reserve in His manifestations of Himself, very different from what had been exhibited by Him during His previous life."[5]

In a word, we are made to feel as we read the strange story that the body of our Lord after His resurrection was a "glorified" or "spiritual" body, and that while it was as real as ours, it was possessed of certain

[1] Luke xxiv. 30, 31.
[2] Luke xxiv. 31.
[3] Luke xxiv. 42: cf. John xxi. 13, where it is said that He gave them the bread and the fish, but not that He Himself ate any.
[4] John xx. 17.
[5] Milligan, "The Resurrection of our Lord," pp. 13, 14.

attributes which we cannot predicate of our own. It was not matter grave-bound, nor enslaved by the laws of gravitation, nor hedged in by the ordinary limitations which hamper the movement and restrain the capacities of our bodies; it was matter as it were refined and sublimated of its grosser qualities, and so made absolutely subordinate to the spirit that used it as its medium. It was a body such as we can easily conceive ours would be if it were released from the laws of decay and death, and the trammels of locality and infirmity. It was indeed a type of the "spiritual body" which is the heavenly heritage of those who die in faith. "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself."[1]

III

We may look at this fact in one of two ways. In the first place, it may be regarded as the consummation of our Lord's human glory and triumph over death, achieved by Him as the reward of His perfect obedience; or, as the representative of the glorified humanity of which He was the type and crown. That is to say, it has a reference that is exclusively personal to Himself; and it has a significant bearing on the doctrine of our own immortality.

1. In the Resurrection Body our Lord received the *seal of the Divine satisfaction with His work* as the Redeemer of Man. It was at once the completion of

[1] Phil. iii. 20, 21.

His offering to God on behalf of humanity, and the reward of the life of perfect obedience which He had lived on earth.

The former aspect of the fact will be best realised in the light of the Levitical Laws relating to sacrifice. We have already touched on this point in dealing with the Atonement as such. It was not the *death* of the victim which symbolised the essential part of the sacrifice. "For the *life* of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls";[1] *i.e.* it is the blood as life, not as poured out in death, that is there given on the altar; and the blood is conceived as being as much alive during the whole of the period when the offering is being made, as before it was drawn forth from the dying animal. What then was the meaning of the death of the creature being offered? It symbolised the law that the "soul that sinneth, it shall surely die." And the sprinkling of the blood on the sacrificer symbolised his life saved in death and through death, and now offered to God, no longer as a dead thing through the law, but as a living thing through the mercy of God. In turning from the type to the Antitype, how does this apply? It can apply only in the light of the Resurrection and the Ascension of our Lord. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, indeed, it is clearly shown that, in the view of the writer, the work of Christ on earth was not complete till He rose and ascended to the Father. As Dr. Milligan puts it, very briefly and graphically:—

"The meaning of our Lord's presentation of Himself in Heaven is thus different from that of His death upon the Cross. Both are indeed parts of one whole; but they are not on that account to be confounded with one another, or to be regarded as the expression, in different

[1] Lev. xvii. 11.

ways, of one and the same thought. There is a distinct difference between them. In the one our great Representative bears the penalty of our sins, submitting Himself to death, the first demand of the Divine law upon the sinner,—yet doing this, not simply that He may die, but that He may pass through death to life. In the other, He who is still our Representative presents Himself to His Heavenly Father, as One who has passed through death to life, and whose life, redeemed from the power of death, is now to be presented for ever to the Father, in joyful gratitude and praise. Were it not for the first act, our Lord, and we in Him, would approach into the Divine presence without that free acceptance of penalty which must be the very first step in our return from evil. Were it not for the second, actual return to God would not take place. Without the former, that death would be wanting out of which alone the corn of wheat can spring up into life. Without the latter, there would be no springing up of the corn of wheat at all. Neither act is sufficient without the other; and both must be accomplished before the sacrifice of the Heavenly High Priest can be regarded as complete." [1]

But there is something more than this in the personal aspects of the Resurrection. In it our Lord received the pledge that His work was acceptable to His Father. It was an assurance that it had been perfectly done. In the passage which we have already quoted from the Philippians we have this clearly taught. After describing the humiliation of the Saviour, the Apostle goes on to say, "Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name." [2] He Himself brings this aspect of His work

[1] Milligan, "The Resurrection of our Lord," pp. 140, 141.
[2] Phil. ii. 9.

before us: "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again."[1] And there are many passages which we need not now dwell upon in which the same thought is suggested.[2]

2. Let us now go to the more universal aspect. Christ is the Representative Man, and in the picture of His exalted condition after His resurrection we see *a type of perfect Manhood in its glorified condition.*

The differences which we have noted as existing between our Lord's corporeal attributes after and before His being raised from the dead, are from this point of view no mere portents or isolated phenomena, but are full of significance for those who are His followers. The Resurrection-state was in His case an advance on that state which preceded it; it was a truly glorified state. Before this His body had been the body of our humiliation, He being made in all respects like unto us. He was made of the "seed of David according to the flesh," and we are told that, "since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same."[3] But if the pre-resurrection body was a "carnal" body (*i.e.* a truly human, fleshly, though not sinful body), the post-resurrection body was a "spiritual" body. It is true that the Spirit dwelt in fulness in Him from the time of His baptism; but He (the Spirit) was not in a position to act with entire freedom in "producing His natural effects upon His [Christ's] bodily frame." He must work out the full work of redemption, and achieve the victory of love in the very nature that had sinned. "Had His body been changed before this was done,

[1] John x. 17.
[2] See Acts iii. 13 (cf. iv. 10, 11); Rom. viii. 34; Eph. i. 20; 1 Peter i. 21; Rev. i. 18.
[3] Heb. ii. 14.

He would have failed to be our Representative at the very moment when that love had reached its point of highest intensity;[1] when it was most pleasing to the Father;[2] and when it had achieved its most glorious results.[3] At the Resurrection it was different. The suffering for our sake to which love led Him to submit had culminated in death; the sacrifice rendered necessary by the relations between a holy God and sinful Man had been presented; the corn of wheat, having fallen into the ground and died, was ready to produce much fruit. No hindrance existed now to the passing onward of our Lord's body to its perfection; and in such a body—a distinct advance upon that with which He had formerly lived and died—Jesus rose."[4]

And in rising He took, in a representative sense, our own nature with Him. The teaching of the New Testament is that He is organically related to us in a way so intimate that no earthly relationship can be compared with it for closeness and intimacy. He is Man as none of us are men; and we are related to Him (in the life of faith) as we cannot be related to one another. When the work of faith is realised in us in its fulness, we become one with Him in a manner so close that the distinctions drawn between one personality and another do not apply. "Abide in Me, and I in you. . . . I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from Me ye can do nothing."[5] This intimacy is such that Paul actually speaks of it thus:—Our "bodies are members of Christ."[6] "I have been crucified with Christ."[7] "If we died with Christ, we

[1] John xiii. 1.
[2] John x. 17.
[3] John xii. 32.
[4] Milligan, *l.c.*, p. 131.
[5] John xv. 4, 5.
[6] 1 Cor. vi. 15.
[7] Gal. ii. 20.

believe that we shall also live with Him. . . . Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God *in* Christ Jesus."[1] And again, "When we were dead through our trespasses, [God] quickened us together with Christ, . . . and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus."[2] "In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."[3] It is in this sense that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the assurance and type of the resurrection of His saints. The ground of it is that of spiritual union. And in thus carrying our nature with Him into the heavenly places, He has given us assurance that we too shall be raised at the last day.

From the Evolutionary point of view the stages in our Lord's perfected Person are full of significance. He passed in a manner quite in accordance with the laws of development from the one condition to the other. "Howbeit," says Paul, as he reasons on the subject, "that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural [physical or earthly]; then that which is spiritual."[4] This is in accord with the law that the higher follows on after the lower, and rises out of it, and takes the lower up with it, causing it to share in the glory of the higher. And the progress of our Saviour was made in this gradual way, till the moment came when like the chrysalis rising out of its surrounding shell (to use a crude but familiar figure), He suddenly rose and appeared in the glory "of His Father." And

[1] Rom. vi. 8, 11.
[2] Eph. ii. 5, 6.
[3] Col. ii. 11, 12.
[4] 1 Cor. xv. 46.

when this was accomplished, the long process which had commenced with the first beginnings of life in the far-off ages of which no record exists, and which had been going on through aeons upon aeons, rising slowly upwards till man appeared at last, reaching this point of vantage only to find its development upwards checked and ruined by the Fall—this process was at last completed in Christ Jesus. Through humiliation and suffering, through much toil and tribulation, through many a lapse and recovery, in spite of sin and death and hell, the victory was at last accomplished; and Christ, the First-born of every creature, rose at last conqueror of the last enemy, taking our nature with Him into the presence of the Father, and presenting it a pure and blameless sacrifice, there to be the Intercessor of the race in its imperfect condition on earth. First that which is natural, then that which is spiritual. When He was taken into the Unseen from which He emerged, He did not go back as pure and naked Divinity; He did not lay aside the Manhood which He had made His own, and perfected by His Incarnation: but as Man He rose, as Man He ascended; as Man He now sits at the right hand of the Majesty, and pleads our cause; as Man He watches the mystic process of development in those who are joined with Him in spiritual union, who look at Him as their great Exemplar, and strive to follow in His steps; and it is as Man that He sends forth the Comforter, to lead His people into all truth, and to strengthen them for reaching the hard but splendid goal which He has put before them in His life and Truth. It is this fact of a continued Heavenly Incarnation that gives its abiding beauty to the thought that the "Word" was once made "Flesh," and it is one of the chief sources of comfort and joy for all who believe in His Name.

IV

THE Resurrection of our Lord may be viewed in the light which it throws on the problem of personal immortality.

"To the question, 'What has Science to say to Man's survival after death?' the chief spokesmen of modern science are inclined to answer, 'Nothing at all.' The affirmative answer she holds as unproved, and the negative as unprovable."[1]

This agnostic attitude regarding the future life is unquestionably a feature of present-day science, taking that word in its narrower sense. Now on such a matter suspension of judgment is equivalent to disbelief; for what Science fails to prove, she tends in some sort to disprove. As a result there is a widespread tendency, among such educated people as are accustomed to guide their lives according to the positive dictates of scientific thought, to let the question go by default, and to think and act as though death ended the conscious life of the soul. The natural outcome of this attitude is seen in the widespread and alarming Pessimism which has spread over the literature of the Continent, in France, Germany, and Russia, which on its higher side takes shape in a picturesque despair, and on its lower in a horrible and infra-bestial sensuality, and in a political Nihilism which holds nothing sacred except license, and nothing to be desired except the reduction of the present order of society into chaos.

At the same time there are not wanting indications that the nadir of agnostic indifference and negation has been passed. There is a general turning of the mind with longing towards a more positive faith; and though

[1] "Science and a Future Life," by F. W. H. Myers, p. 1.

many look in strange directions for the reinforcement of their tottering hopes, the fact that they long and look at all is proof that the human soul can never for long be satisfied with the thought of extinction as the ultimate goal of all the strivings and the aspirations of this little span of life. "He hath set eternity in their heart."[1]

Let us briefly consider how the problem stands.

1. It is very clear that recent investigations into the relations between mind and brain have tended to emphasise their interdependence to a remarkable extent. Whatever be the ultimate difference between thought and the molecular movements of the brain-substance, it is certain that in the human organism the process of thinking intimately depends on the condition of its physical vehicle, and so far as we know is normally impossible apart from it. The phenomena of disease tend to reinforce this inference by indicating that abnormal conditions of body greatly affect the intellectual functions, and occasionally reduce them to a state of absolute and permanent chaos. Lastly, the partial removal or atrophy of the brain-substance results in a profound disturbance of the mental activities. The apparent inference, on the physical side, from these facts, is that total destruction of the brain as such results in the annihilation of conscious life. And this is the practical conclusion to which many of our leading scientists have come, even when they carefully refrain from dogmatising on the subject.

This argument, however, may, and often is, carried too far. The fact that under present conditions brain-function is necessary to the performance of our mental operations, does not prove that there may not be other conditions under which the mind is independent of

[1] Eccles. iii. 11 (marginal reading).

physical organism *as we know it*. The phenomena of telepathy and thought-transference, which have been so abundantly proved of recent years, constitute a standing puzzle to the physiologist and even the psychologist, and are preparing the way for the reopening of the whole subject.

> "Star to star vibrates light; may not soul to soul
> Strike thro' some finer element of her own?"

So deeply are Mr. F. W. H. Myers, and his colleagues of the Psychical Research Society, persuaded of the importance of these residual facts, as to build them into a presumptive argument for the survival of the human personality after death; and many who have lost hold of the religious argument are being brought round to the same point by the force of these facts. The amount of real relief and comfort to be gained in this way, however, is not likely to be very great. The facts are valuable from our point of view mainly in so far as they break down prejudice and open the mind to considerations of a higher kind.

2. The inference that death ends Man's personal existence, drawn from the dependence of mind on body, is reinforced by another tendency in the dominant philosophy—that which makes consciousness the mere *effect* of material conditions, and mind "the efflorescence and not the substratum" of the Universe. The Cosmos is not the outcome of infinite wisdom and love, but of the blind clash of atoms moving in mechanical combination according to fixed laws, to which "no human soul or will can add any fresh energy of its own"; so that consciousness, even in its highest human form, is but a kind of *ignis fatuus* hovering over the weltering swirl of material forces, which follow their rigid course in total oblivion of the evanescent splendour that plays over

them, and which vanishes with the delicate but unstable conditions that bring it forth. We cannot here go into the considerations that prove this view to be illusory; it is enough to say that it is a phase of philosophic thought that is passing away, and that a healthier and more robust treatment of the problem is coming rapidly to the fore.[1]

3. The science of human origins, linking Man with the brute creation by much closer lines of connection than was formerly thought to be the case, has, however illogically, made a new difficulty in the way of belief in a future life. The mortality of the lower orders is everywhere taken for granted,—possibly rightly so,—and the question arises, Have we any right to believe that it is different with Man, the last link in the genetic series? It is clear that this argument has validity only on the supposition that there is no essential difference in nature between Man and brute—a question which we have in an earlier chapter dealt with fully,[2] and which we need not further recapitulate here. We shall presently bring forward some additional considerations that bear on this point.

Let us glance at the other and brighter side of scientific thought on the problem of Immortality.

1. Premising that physical science has nothing really relevant to say about the subject, we turn in the first place hopefully to the ethical nature of Man, and ask if it throws any light on our darkness. Nor is our hope disappointed. It is the *differentia* of Man that he can enter into truly ethical relations. These relations are independent of time and place; they belong to an eternal

[1] For an able exposure of the fallacy underlying the argument against Immortality drawn from the supposed *causal* relation between brain and mind, see Prof. William James's little book on "Human Immortality" (Ingersoll Lecture for 1898).

[2] Introd., chap. iii.

order ; old age and decay have no bearing upon them ; as a subject in this august kingdom, Man partakes of their supersensuous and fadeless character. The ideals they impose on him are not of the earth, but of heaven ; the sanctions by which they work are drawn from the Unseen ; their laws cannot be analysed into mere temporary, much less physical, constituents, but sweep onward in a curve that vanishes into but is not broken by the mists of death. It may be "irrational" to speak of love and virtue, moral beauty and holiness, as immortal ; but the seers and the poets of the world, with their deep insight into the heart of things, have ever clung passionately to the faith that the soul capable of these high attributes and altitudes cannot perish with the bodily life where for the time their symmetries are enshrined and their promise is unfolded. The finest expression of this creed of the soul was given to us half a century ago in "In Memoriam," a poem which, in all its range of thought and emotion, contains nothing "which the newest Science can condemn or the truest Religion find lacking."[1] Its burden throughout is the inconceivability of the idea that creatures capable of bringing to its fine flower the seed of an undying love can perish. This faith in the survival of the soul, as the necessary corollary to the harmonies and hopes of the ethical nature, is one that has existed in all ages, and is borne witness to by all the world's greatest thinkers. The miasma of philosophic doubt may at times cause the belief to droop under its dark shadow ; but the soul's hope asserts itself with unconquerable buoyancy whenever the pressure is removed, and its instincts are permitted to assert themselves in their native right.

[1] Myers on "Tennyson as a Prophet" in "Science and a Future Life," p. 135.

2. When we consider Man in relation to the order of which he is the crown and goal, the hope born of our ethical possibilities is reinforced. The course of Evolution, with its slow but inevitable march upwards and onwards, has brought forth Man, the "flower of the ages." There have been unspeakable tragedies of pain and sorrow, failure and apparent waste, wrought on the way. The expenditure of energy, the sacrifice of life, in the individual and in the species, the manifold tentative efforts, as it were, made in all directions, before Man appeared, have been incalculable, inconceivable. All through, the organic energies of Nature seemed ever directed towards a far point on the horizon which gradually came nearer and nearer, till at last Man,

"The heir of hopes too fair to turn out false,"

came within sight. As we look back along the path of organic Evolution, it is impossible to help being impressed with the "dramatic movement" that characterises it, and with the fact that the whole finds its consummation in him. He is the keystone of the arch of physical development, the final issue of all the groaning and travailing of creation until now. There is to be no more physical Evolution; there is to be no higher earthly being than Man. But in the very fact that he is the consummation of this earthly process, Man has acquired certain secondary peculiarities which suggest that he is himself an unfinished result. Looking back at the path that leads up to him, we recognise that he is the complement of creation, its finishing touch. But looking within himself, and forward to the ends that shape themselves dimly before him, he recognises that he is still inchoate, still germinal—or shall we say an unfinished, nay, a maimed torso, whose

fine colossal lines suggest the splendid outline of what Man would be if he had a vaster theatre than this earth, for the completion of his designs and the perfecting of his nature, affords?[1]

All these "intimations of immortality," however, drawn from the promptings of faith and the natural longings and expectations of the soul in its highest moods, are purely presumptive in their force, and do not amount to a logical argument. Faith faints in the thin air of speculation, and longs for more substantial spiritual nurture than comes from this direction. And so we have to fall back on the Resurrection of our Lord as being, after all, the chief pledge and assurance, *for believers*, of their personal immortality.

This is the position that was taken up by the apostles of the Lord Jesus after the event took place. If the discourses of these men that were delivered after the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost be examined, they will be found to place emphasis on the Resurrection far more than on the sacrifice of the Cross.[2] It was the fact that God had raised up His Son from the grave that transformed them into missionaries and gave them their first great converting power over the minds of their contemporaries. And even in the case of the Apostle Paul we have but to examine his Epistles to find how entirely he based his faith on the doctrine of a Risen Saviour. It is on this fact at least that he builds up his famous argument of the Resurrection of believers. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up

[1] On this subject see Newman Smyth's "The Place of Death in Evolution," Geo. A. Gordon's "Immortality and the New Theodicy" (both published by James Clarke & Co.), and Welldon's "The Hope of Immortality."

[2] See the following passages: Acts ii. 24, 32; iii. 15, 26; iv. 10; v. 30; x. 40; xiii. 30, 33, 34; xvii. 31, etc., etc.

Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you."[1] "If we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over Him."[2] "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."[3] "And if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain."[4] In these words, as it has been well said, there is something more than the hope of immortality set before us. "There is the hope that we, with our present powers and faculties and affections, with our present complex nature, with our bodies as well as our souls, shall pass, like Israel of old, through the swellings of Jordan into the land of promise."

And as a matter bearing vitally on our special inquiry, it should be noticed that it is not taught us in the analogy of our Lord's Resurrection that the future life is a disembodied state. The future life is not to be one of pure spirit. We are to be like our Lord, and He ascended into the Unseen in possession of a body like ours, only glorified, and made free from the law of sin and death. Though this does not make a belief in a future life more easy in itself, it does take away that difficulty which is felt by many who cannot realise how the soul can exist without some kind of an organism with which to act. It helps us to look forward to a time when we shall not be pent up in a body which is but an imperfect medium for our will to work with, as the present body is. Now it is, according to the Apostle's statement, a body of death; it is under the

[1] Rom. viii. 11.
[2] Rom. vi. 8, 9.
[3] 1 Cor. xv. 22.
[4] *Ibid.*, verse 14.

law of gravitation ; it is limited to place and time ; it is full of disease and corruption, and pain and various ills. In this life it hampers the growth of the soul ; it stands in our way when we would spend and be spent in the service of our God ; weariness and fatigue limit our powers of service ; our senses are dull, and we are bound in a narrow round of impressions and physical phenomena, which are not the environment with which our better natures are in deepest sympathy. The "brute inheritance" hinders and retards our development in a thousand ways. But the Resurrection of our Lord is an earnest that a time will come, to those who do their part in this life faithfully, when the dualism that now makes life a constant struggle will be resolved into a glorious harmony, when the diverse parts of our nature will be working in perfect friendship. And what a splendid outlook does this open up to those who are now struggling painfully towards the light and the truth, amid much discouragement and frequent lapses, and but partial victories at the best! It whispers of a time when our development will be easy and not difficult ; and when the body will join with the soul in that Evolution which will mean that we shall be "transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit."[1]

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 18.

"Step by step since time began
We see the steady gain of man;
For still the new transcends the old,
In signs and tokens manifold.
Slaves rise up men; the olive waves
With roots deep-set in battle graves.'

Chapter II.—The Resurrection a New Evolutionary Departure

The Release of Spiritual Force at Pentecost—This a New Phase of the Incarnation—Means whereby this was effected—Justification by Faith—Life of the Spirit—In Individuals—In the Church—In the World at large—Summary.

I

WE are as yet far from exhausting the full Evolutionary significance of the Resurrection of our Lord. Hitherto we have dealt with it from the personal point of view, as giving a pledge of individual immortality, and as suggesting the higher conditions under which the spiritual body will live and develop in the world to come, also as putting the seal of the Divine favour on the perfect obedience and the atoning passion of the Saviour. All this is most interesting as a subject for study, as an object-lesson for our faith, as giving us a glimpse into the great unknown future into which we shall all soon have to disappear. But again we say, if the Gospel does not afford us a new source of strength, and reveal to us a new motive power, all this does not amount to much; and in what way it does afford such a prospect and assurance, we shall now make it our endeavour to explain.

Jesus Christ in one of His last discourses makes the astonishing statement that it is expedient for His disciples that He should go away from them, meaning by that His disappearance from the world. If we put

ourselves into the position of these simple men, we shall easily understand that this remark must have perplexed and pained them beyond measure. To lose Him from their sight was surely the last thing they could desire. It meant a loss that they could only dimly divine. From Him they had received all that made their life worthy and noble. In His presence alone they felt that they truly lived ; from Him they derived all their confidence in God, and their power to work for Man. Apart from Him, as they well knew, they could do nothing. Round them, they knew, were fierce and implacable enemies, who thirsted for the blood of their Master ; and although, so far, all the fury of these enemies had been directed against Him, they felt sure that, when He had disappeared, they too would be persecuted and slain. And so when He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away," they could only look on in bewilderment, and ask hesitating and irrelevant questions.

And yet we have only to take up the story of these men a few weeks later to find the answer to this perplexity. After the Ascension they soon became different men. Up till the period of the descent of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they were weak, hesitating, uncertain creatures, depending upon their Master for all their stimulus and enthusiasm. But what a change took place at the Day of Pentecost! The unstable, resourceless disciples become, suddenly, men charged with a burning message, and full of earnest and quenchless enthusiasm ; and those who could do nothing for a personally present Master, except as they were inspired by His voice and look, were able to "turn the world upside-down" for Him, once He disappeared from the circle of which He had been the centre and was seen no more. There is nothing in history like

this sudden transformation of commonplace men into heroes and saints and martyrs, and from the naturalistic point of view, we have no hesitation in saying that it was something not only unparalleled, but inexplicable.

What was the secret of this remarkable change? It is given in the fulfilment of the promise of the Holy Spirit: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you."[1] "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: ye know Him; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you."[2] Such was the Master's promise. And the fulfilment is found described in a remarkable statement by Peter in the Acts: "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear."[3] And not only here but in many other passages, it is taught that when our Lord ascended on high, He sent forth the Spirit, in such a way that the unspeakable loss which His followers experienced through His departure was not merely mitigated, but far more than replaced by the greater blessing which that departure entailed. It was thus with a fine instinct that the Church consecrated the First Day of the week on the basis not of the Crucifixion, but of the Resurrection of her Lord, as dating the real beginning of her life and the source of her strength. It is a question that may well be asked why the Incarnation and the Vicarious Sacrifice of our Lord were not made the ground of that perpetual commemoration. The answer

[1] John xvi. 7. [2] John xiv. 16, 17. [3] Acts ii. 32, 33.

is simple. It was not till His Resurrection that the work of Christ was so completed that it could be made a true part of the life of humanity. Then He became the Second Adam—a life-giving Spirit from heaven. Then it was that He was able to enter into that more intimate and helpful relationship to His people which surpassed the relationship He held to them on earth, inasmuch as it was for the future an internal energy instead of an external companionship. Formerly He abode *with* them; henceforth, through the operation of His Spirit, He would be *in* them. During His corporeal life on earth He was limited, in His intercourse with them, to the ordinary sources of communication. He was hemmed in by the restrictions of bodily existence; He could only inspire them as He was personally present with them, and He could be personally present with them only as we are able to be present with one another—that is, through the medium of the senses. But with His uplifting from the earth, all this limitation became a thing of the past; He was now glorified not only in that He Himself was released from the trammels of the bodily condition, but in that He could henceforth communicate Himself universally to those who believed in His name. Formerly He was with His people only in a partial local sense; now He could be with all who were willing to join themselves to Him spiritually, in all lands and in all places at the same time; He would be with them "alway, even unto the end of the days."[1]

This was to be the fruit of His sore travail and sorrows; to this He had been looking forward from the beginning as the "flying point of bliss remote" for which He had suffered and agonised. He was no more to be *with* His people; He would be *in* them.

[1] Matt. xxviii. 20.

And with this consummation there would naturally come an expansion of His redeeming work which would alter its whole aspect, and bring about the distinctive phenomena of Christianity as it has been realised in history. The reign of isolated believers, dependent on the visible presence of the Master, was now over; the reign of the Church had come.

From this time forth, therefore, the Incarnation changed its character. It was not any more a thing of the past; rather, it entered on another and more glorious phase. A new conception of human life had been revealed in the earthly life of our Lord; "the Word" had been made "Flesh"; now this life was to be incorporated into the life of humanity at large through a kind of heredity which had not been at work in the same sense before. The ideal had hitherto been an Ideal, a Dream of the future; henceforth it would be a factor in the Higher Evolution of the Human Race. Slowly and by stages that demonstrate how thoroughly the lower principle of heredity—that of sinful tendency and desire—had been inwoven into the very tissues of our human nature, the New Life began its course in the unfolding drama of History; often obscured, often almost lost amid the resurgent corruptions that stain the records of the Church, but always winning its way, from little to more, into power, till it has become the most diffused and universal influence in the progress of Man. It is possible to minimise the part that Christianity has played in the story of the last nineteen centuries, and in the measure that historians have been prejudiced against it, they have given to other forces and influences the credit due to the religion of Jesus Christ; but an impartial observer cannot but see that there came into the world at that time a New Conception of Character, and a New Realisation of the Higher Virtues.

II

When we ask what was the means by which the New Life was made an effective force in the world's history, the answer comes to us in the old phraseology, in these two phrases—"Justification by Faith" and "The Life of the Spirit."

1. Justification by Faith.

This is a term which has often become rather a watchword of conflict than a means of grace. Without entering into the controversial phases of the question, let us see how this doctrine can be expressed in the terms of modern Evolutionary Science.

Let us say at once that faith is but a name for a process in the soul, or rather it is the means by which a latent and hidden process becomes overt and active.

Back of all consciousness in the soul, there is the fact that our life is borrowed from that of Another. We do not live by our own right; we no more exist independently in a spiritual sense than we exist physically in independence of our environment. There is an impenetrable background from which we derive all that we essentially are and have. This sense of dependence cannot be denied when once we bring our minds to consider the conditions of our being. There is no man who can say that he lives mentally, morally, or spiritually in virtue of self-sustained resources. Just as physically life "comes" to us, and all we have to do with the fact is to fulfil the conditions of its continuance and development, so spiritually does our life "come" to us, and all we have to do with it is to see that the channel along which the stream is fed and replenished is kept free and open Now the basis of all spiritual life is the relation of Fatherhood and Sonship that exists between the Divine

and the Human. All men are the sons of God by nature, having in them a doorway open to the incoming and a chamber for the indwelling of the Spirit of the Most High. There is no finer statement of this, the central mystery of life, in English nor perhaps in any literature, than in Emerson's Essay on the "Over-soul": "From within and from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all."[1] . . . "Of this pure nature every man is at some time sensible. Language cannot paint it with its colours. It is too subtle. It is undefinable, unmeasurable, but we know that it pervades and contains us. We know that all spiritual being is in Man. A wise old proverb says, 'God comes to us without bell'; that is, as there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so there is no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect, ends, and God, the cause, begins. The walls are taken away. We lie open on that side of our nature which is directed to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God."[2] . . . "With each divine impulse the mind rends the thin rinds of the visible and finite, and comes out into eternity, and inspires and expires its air."[3] This Sonship is thus not a matter of voluntary effort to attain, so far at least as its essence is concerned. But it must emerge into consciousness in order to be fully developed; and by persistent neglect, or by wilful sin, the channel of communication between the soul and God may be entirely closed, and a spiritual atrophy may set in which at last ends in death. Now Faith is "the active instinct of that inner Sonship; it is the point at which that essential Sonship emerges into consciousness; it is the disclosure to the

[1] Emerson's Works (Bohn's Edition), Vol. I., p. 112.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[3] *Ibid.*, p 115.

self of its own vital secret; it is the thrill of our inherent childhood, as it makes itself felt within the central recesses of the life; it is the flame which shoots into consciousness at the recognition of the touch of our Divine Fatherhood; it is the immediate response of the Sonship in us to its discovered origin." [1]

In the moral consciousness of every man, however, there is a stubborn sense that, while its basis of this relationship remains, the channel whereby it is maintained has been tampered with, and its claim forfeited. We have no power and no right to claim our Sonship and enter into its privileges. By what means shall a man be justified before God, so that the lost relationship may be restored? How may the Higher Life be regained and carried on to perfection?

By the free mercy of God as shown in the Gospel of Jesus Christ His Son. By a Divine act, in other words, and not a human. The way has been opened through the humiliation and sacrifice and death and resurrection of the Son of God, who is also the Son of Man. And as it is perfectly plain that we cannot do anything to put ourselves right with God, the only resource at our disposal is to accept the offer of mercy, and being unable to attain justification by works, attain it through appropriating the life of the Son of God. And faith is the faculty whereby this is done.

But what exactly is meant by this faith? Not simply a verbal or intellectual acceptance of the fact that Jesus died for our sins. That could no more achieve this great result than would the acceptance of any other fact of history. After it had been accepted, we should be just where we were before. The statement of Scripture is not that we are justified by the *fact* of Christ's death. That glorious act of sacrifice made

[1] "Lux Mundi," p. 15.

the justification possible, but it did not consummate it. Christ died for our sins, and *rose again* "for our justification."[1] That is to say, it is through His Rising from the dead that He was able to come into that relationship with the believer which restores the Sonship that was lost or interrupted. By a spiritual union with Him, we are brought back to the filial mood and attitude towards the Father. We are made one with God; we are accepted "in the Beloved."[2] And the Resurrection was the means whereby this was brought within our reach.

2. The Life of the Spirit.

This is the consummation which is achieved by a saving faith,—it brings us into touch with the Living Spirit of God, so that we make our home and environment in God. Henceforth our natural limitations are no longer our prison-house; they have lost their absolute character, and become relative only; and our spiritual nature receives an access of power, and a possibility of expansion, which is limited only by our willingness and receptivity. As the future development of mankind is to be in the direction of its spiritual nature, we can see how this doctrine of the Spirit has a vital relation with our special inquiry. Every real act of prayer, every genuine achievement in character, every fresh realisation of the deeper things of the Spirit, every earnest, honest aspiration, every lowly deed of unselfish kindness, in short every desire and every effort upwards and onwards in the higher directions that are opened out before us in the Christian Conception of Life, is but another step in that ladder of attainment which begins here on earth, and climbs at last to the throne of God in Heaven.

This life of the Spirit manifests itself in three ways.

[1] Rom. iv. 25. [2] Eph. i. 6.

(*a*) In the experience and perfecting of the character of individual believers. This is the germinal point of all its manifestations in the world. The starting-point of all fresh evolutions in the lower as well as in the higher creation of God is in individuals. In the lower orders every new species has had its start in the fortunate variations embodied in one individual who stands genetically at the head of the new series, and the method of transmission is by direct heredity. The function of that individual is exhausted in procreation, and the process is then carried on by ordinary vital channels. In the higher and spiritual order the secret is again by generation, but by a different method. We all derive our life from the Individual who started the new Type; but as in the former case the medium was indirect, in this case it is direct. In the case of bodily transmission we come in a series; in the case of spiritual evolution we are no longer bound by such mechanical rule, and we all derive our new life, without any intermediary, by the immediate act of the same Spirit, and being free creatures, we are freely regenerated by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and made in the likeness of the Son of God. Thus is the type renewed, and the heritage of the fulness of God passed on from generation to generation. But without this New Birth the type cannot be preserved. "Verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."[1] And when the New Birth has been consummated in the soul of the believer, he has but to continue faithfully in touch with the Spirit, and earnestly striving to do the Divine will, to find his nature filling out into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. He will grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, *i.e.* not the mere knowledge that

[1] John iii. 3.

is objective and outward, but in that knowledge which comes of inward communion and progressive appropriation of the Divine Life.

(*b*) In the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

The Church is composed of believers in Christ who combine for the purpose of mutual help and the upbuilding of each other in all holy living and thought, and for the realisation of the social side of the work and Ideal of Christ. For if He is the type according to which individuals are to model their life and character, so does He reveal the type according to which all communities of men who believe in His name are to shape their social ideals. The Church was founded by the express command of its Lord; and He promised to be with His people in a sense in which it is impossible for the individual believer to realise His presence alone and in solitude.[1] The Church is His "Body,"[2] the means by and through which He works on the world, and brings His influence ostensibly to bear on the world outside. The Church is the Lord's witness, the visible channel of His power, the instrument whereby He puts forth His claim over all things, and demands the allegiance of the race for whom He died and rose again. It was instituted by the Risen Saviour Himself; it was started on its long and chequered career at the outpouring on the Day of Pentecost. The marks of the true Church are the following:—

(i) *Spirituality.* That is to say, the Church, as we have already incidentally suggested, is composed of believers, and of believers only. It is not conterminous with the world, nor with the nation, nor with the community in which it has its being. It is composed of those who have separated themselves from the world

[1] Matt. xviii. 18-20. [2] Eph. i. 23.

for the purpose of bearing witness to their faith in Christ, and to their intention to live the life of faith, in communion with Him. Therefore it cannot be "the nation in its religious capacity," as it is put sometimes, nor can it be conterminous with the "parish"; both these contain many who are in no sense a part of the Body of Christ, and are in no organic union with Him, so that to include them in the definition of the Church is to do violence to the first principle of its Divine constitution. Nor is the Church through its Sacraments the origin of eternal life to those who belong to it. All life must come direct from the One Source of life, which is the Holy Spirit of God acting on the willing mind of the recipient; and though the Church is the usual means whereby this influence is brought to bear on the soul, those who would restrict the action of God's Spirit within the narrow limits of an organised society contradict alike the spirit and genius of the Gospel, and the facts of history. The Church is God's cultivated field, His garden, but the sunshine that draws forth its fruitfulness shines also on the wilderness and the hedgerow; the Spirit's breath blows "where it listeth," cherishing many a wild flower, and fructifying many an unnoticed herb and tree, out in the waste places of the earth. But though there may be true believers who are not connected actually with the visible Church, but who live in the Saviour who is the Spirit of which the Church is the Body, the converse of this proposition is not true; there are no persons who rightly belong to the Church unless they are first of all in real and vital union with the Saviour. To be related to the only true fountain of life is the first essential, then comes the union with the rest of His Body.

(ii) This brings us to the second mark of the Church, and that is *Unity of the Spirit*, with diversity of parts

and gifts. It is animated by "the same Spirit," but there are "diversities of gifts."[1] All believers are to be vivified by the same principle of life, but in the great Body there is room for many diverse organs, each with its special function and work to do. This bond of unity is one that transcends every possible difference between the members in other directions. "For in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit."[2] The one final condition of membership in this Body is that which lies behind all dividing lines. We cannot expect that we shall ever come to *think* alike, where uniformity of thinking depends on so many elements that are never joined in similar measure in any two personalities; but as we have a common humanity, we *can* be brought to *feel* alike, granted only that we have a common object of love, and a single uniting bond of affection. Thus it is that while a certain emphasis is laid on right thinking in the New Testament, and a general basis of belief is needful for fellowship to be harmonious and effective, the final stress is laid not on definite articles of creed, but on *Love* as the animating sentiment that runs below and around and through every divergence of opinion and every distinction of race, and station, and nationality. This bond of union allows abundant freedom of action, and a wide liberty of thought. It is "the better way" of whose grand possibilities Paul sings so gloriously in the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

(iii) Following this test comes another as its corollary —mutual dependence of the members on one another, as well as a common dependence of all upon the great Head. Being an organic union both on the human

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 4. [2] *Ibid.*, verse 13.

and the Divine side, it follows that the parts or organs have no completely independent life apart from that which feeds and sustains them all, and they cannot perform their functions properly without acting in a loving union. However there may be differences of thought and opinion, these will in no wise affect the interworking of the parts, provided that the divergences do not interfere with the true union of all with the Head, for the spirit of love will run through all of them as a solvent, and harmonise all that savours of division and discord. As a certain poet has aptly though somewhat unconventionally expressed it,—

> "Then by strange art she mingled fire and snow
> Together, tempering the repugnant mass
> With liquid love,—all things together grow
> Through which the mystery of love can pass."[1]

"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away."[2]

If all these tests of the Church be examined in the light of what Evolution says about life and the conditions of its continuance, it will be easily seen that they contain a guarantee of permanence and healthfulness while the world lasts. So long as the Church preserves its spirituality, and keeps the channel of communication

[1] Shelley's "Witch of Atlas."
[2] See 1 Cor. xiii. passim.

with the Master uncontaminated, depending on His presence for its life and on His grace for its preservation, it is sure of the first essential condition of continuance. So long as it opens its arms to receive new members from the world, absorbing them by the assimilative power which is the mark of a healthy organism, it is assured of new materials wherewith to nourish its life and extend the range of its activities. And so long as it continues to show the spirit of mutual love and forbearance within its organisation, it is assured of the certainty that it will be not only able to survive all attacks from the outside, but also all disintegrating processes from within. "Love never faileth."

This is the condition in which the Church would be if it fulfilled its true law of growth. But we have, in stating these conditions of its life, spoken of the ideal Church. This is not the Church of History, nor the Church of to-day. From almost the beginning, it has but imperfectly fulfilled the conditions. It has often been more worldly than spiritual; it has in many ways been disunited, and is now more disunited in outward organisation, though happily not in sympathy, than ever before, to the unspeakable detriment of its highest interests. And it has not unfrequently been as exclusive as it ought to be hospitable, becoming fossilised in creed, narrow in sympathies—a religious club rather than a spiritual City of God with its twelve gates open to the incoming of the nations. And therefore the life of the Church has never been what it ought to be, and History speaks with no uncertain voice of the corruptions and sins of the Church, both against its Master, and against the world for which, like its Master, it ought to be living and working. But in so far as it has lived and done something for the amelioration of Society, and for the salvation of the world, this has been in virtue of the

partial fulfilment of these conditions of which we have been speaking; and in the exact measure that it has been spiritual, open-hearted, and keenly interested in the welfare of the world, and full of love and peace within its own borders, just so far and no further has it been successful and aggressive in its work and life.

(*c*) But the presence and the life of the Spirit can be confined in its operations neither to the life of the individuals who have received Him into their hearts, nor to the Church which is the Body of Christ. There is a sphere in which Christ has been and is working without the aid of believers, either viewed singly as individuals, or viewed in their corporate capacity as a Church—and that is in the world itself. It is impossible to ignore the fact that He is at work among many who do not know Him or acknowledge His authority; that He is energising among the institutions of Society, guiding the pathway of thought, and generally preparing the world for the receipt of the spiritual truth which He came to reveal, and the eternal life He brought as His gift to all who would accept of it. In the world of politics, in the world of literature, in the world of business, in the world of labour, He has shown the power of His Spirit; and though men are slow indeed to acknowledge His authority, and slower still to connect His name with the good influences which they feel in their hearts and around them, those of us who believe in Him as the Word are equally bound by our affection for His name, and by the logical consequences of our faith, to trace all these upward tendencies to the diffused activity of His Spirit among men, and the process by which He is preparing the whole world for the final acceptance of His Truth. Indeed, to limit His activity to the narrow channels of influence that are connected with His Church, would be to give Him

but a small place among the moulding forces of humanity; for the Church comprehends but an insignificant minority of the whole population even of the countries which are called Christian. But far and wide the vital energies of the truth that was revealed in Jesus has scattered its flying seeds; the air is impregnated with them, and as they come in contact with good soil, with impressionable hearts, with minds that are not closed to the light, these seeds spring up, and do not fail to come to some kind of fruitage. It is, however, in the nature of things that, as these influences are mingled with all kinds of hostile forces, and have to take their place according to the welcome they get from human hearts, the result they produce is not in accordance with the nobility of their origin, and they sometimes lose all sign of that origin through the contamination of secular and unholy influences reacting on them. It is thus impossible for us always to disentangle the spiritual forces of life from their environment and trace them to their true source, or even to measure them according to their quality. The path of goodness is disguised in many ways, and in the muddy stream of history it is hard to trace the pure waters of the fountain of life, for it is mingled with that which has flowed from the pit that is bottomless, as well as those rivulets that have had their rise in the forest lands and waste places of human lawlessness and self-will. Thus it is hard to get those who have written the world's histories to give Christianity its proper place amid the moulding influences of mankind; and the difficulty has been increased, on the one side, by the jealousy with which the ecclesiastical party has viewed all attempts to call any influence good or in any sense derived from Christ which has flowed through any but the so-called orthodox channels; and, on the other

hand, by the purblind obstinacy of unbelieving thinkers in refusing to accept the abundant evidence of history to the pervasive and quickening influences that have flowed in ever-increasing measure from the Person and Cross of Christ. But for all that, the Spirit of Christ has been and is moving over the troubled waters of human history, has moulded much of the course of the ages, and has been preparing the way for the time when every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall call His name blessed.

To sum up the Scriptural Teaching of the Resurrection. The rising of our Lord from the dead, and His ascension to Heaven, there to be our Advocate and our High Priest—that is to say, the close of the period of humiliation in His history—was not the end of the process of Incarnation, but only of its initial stage. Or, we should be more correct perhaps in saying that it was an episode—in a sense the most important episode in the whole process, but by no means the completion. He was in the world before, and He has been in the world since. In prophecy He was as it were embryonically incarnated; in His human life, the type which He revealed was embodied so that all might see it; since the Resurrection, that type has, through the influence of His Spirit on the human soul, been multiplied and enlarged so as to partially lift up humanity to its august level. But it is all one process, and we cannot understand any part in the line of development of the spiritual life of Man without taking the whole into our purview. As Bishop Westcott says: "The promise of redemption, symbolised by the deliverance from Egypt, prefigured by the types of the Law, illustrated by the teaching of the prophets, was the vital bond of the people of Israel; and no less the accomplishment of Redemption, shown

in the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the consequent Mission of the Comforter, is the Spring of life in the Christian Body. In the Church the fact of the Resurrection so to speak is perpetuated ; and the Idea of the Resurrection is realised. On the one hand, the development of the Church witnesses to the consecration of every power of Man to a Divine use, and marks the potential transfiguration of every variety of individual or national character, as parts of a sublimer whole ; and on the other hand it claims the possession of this transforming energy in virtue of the working of a Risen Saviour through its outward institutions. Briefly it is inherently historical"—*i.e.* it follows the laws and has to conform to the limitations of an Evolutionary process.[1]

[1] "Gospel of the Resurrection," p. 192.

"Red of the Dawn!
Is it turning a fainter red? So be it, but when shall we lay
The ghost of the brute that is walking and haunting us yet, and be free?
In a hundred, a thousand winters? Ah! what will our children be,
The men of a hundred thousand, a million summers away?"
TENNYSON.

Chapter III.—The Man that Is to Be

The Humanity of the Future—The Coming Evolution Mental, not Physical—Social and Moral, not Individualistic—Religious, not Agnostic or Materialistic—What of "Reversed Cosmic Evolution"?—No Cause for Fear.

WE have now come to the final stage of our inquiry into the bearings of Evolutionary Science on Christian Theology, as affecting, that is, the question of the future Human Destiny, first in this world, and secondly in the world to come. In one sense, this is the most hypothetical branch of the problem, in that it deals with matters of probability, and therefore of uncertainty. At the same time it is far and away the most important, because it refers, not to the past which cannot be changed, but to the future, which concerns every man vitally, and which is to some extent under the control of human will and action. It behoves us, therefore, to take heed to our ways, and to proceed with cautious and reverent steps. Our path is already strewn with the ruins of many an exploded theory, for prophets of good and ill are many, and of these few have the prophet's mantle, fewer still the seer's authentic vision. For ourselves, our way is safeguarded by the fact that, while we would fearlessly accept all the new light that has been granted through the expansion of recent thought, we are anchored in the faith that our final source of light on the future of humanity is contained in the Christian

Revelation, and that the speculations of human science are valuable to us as they serve to a better and a more thorough understanding of the truths there held in solution, which are crystallised and brought into their true perspective only as we come to a better understanding of our own nature, and of the world in which we live.

Truly it is with a sense of deep and stirring expectancy that we remove our eyes from the troubled past, with its story of struggle and waste and wrong, its tragedies of woe, its sad moral arrest, and ask ourselves what are our prospects under the glow of the new sunrise that brightens from behind the Cross and the Empty Grave. We now know the outline of the pathway along which Man has arrived at his present vantage-ground of physical development and spiritual opportunity; we have studied the forces that are at his disposal for further growth and progress; it therefore remains for us to complete our survey with an earnest glance at the untrodden future which stretches its aeons before him, and ask ourselves what are the possibilities of his course, what the limitations that yet bar his way, what the Destiny which he can work out for himself, under the inspiration and through the ministries of the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God. Man in the Making, and Man in the Marring, we have seen: what of Man in the Re-making?

I

It will be well first to realise the limitations which bar the way. The future Evolution of Man, so far as the forces at work in the world are understood, will not, it is clear, be a *physical* evolution. It will be, first, a *mental* one, and that probably within strictly defined limits.

We have already suggested the lines of evidence which seem to foreclose this question. Man has reached his final form, so far as his bodily organisation is concerned. Even his brain, the "organ of mentality," has almost if not quite reached its limit of development, at least so far as size is concerned. Prof. Clelland shows that the cephalic cavity has reached its superior limits, and will never alter in shape materially from what it is now. This indeed is no barrier to a finer brain-capacity, for there is one way in which the development of the brain may be carried on without increasing its bulk or weight. The brains of great men, in such cases as have been examined after death, are found to differ quite as much in quality as in quantity from those of ordinary men, and, still more, in the number of convolutions characteristic of the grey matter that is most nearly associated with the act of thinking. When therefore we say that Man has come to his final allowance of brain, we do not mean to say that the average brain of the race may not be greatly improved in quality, both by education and other stimulating factors in the environment acting through untold ages, and by better means of "selection," voluntarily followed, under the direction of an improved science and the inspiration of finer altruistic motives. Hitherto, however, there is not the slightest ground for supposing that this process will take place. So far as we can gather reliable evidence from the tiny historical arc within our past horizon, the average physical and brain endowment of the earliest cave-men was not far if any behind that of the ordinary man of to-day; and as regards the comparatively recent case of the Greeks, Romans, and some other "ancient" nations, they seem to have been as highly endowed physically as any of us, and to have possessed as fine if not finer brains. It is in any

case quite certain that there are no new physical organs being developed in the race. We shall never possess a new sense, such as hearing, or sight, or smell ; there are no dawning faculties shaping themselves within us ; and if our present equipment of body and so of mind is far from being developed out in the direction of its ultimate possibilities, it will at least be all the capital of physical energy and organisation we shall ever possess in this life.

Indeed, there are not wanting ominous signs that our present possessions are held on an insecure tenure. Many Evolutionists are busily sounding a note of warning as to the evil effects of the supersession of the law of "natural selection" in the life of Man. The function of this law is to conserve "favourable variations," to correct the result of free intermarriage (which always tends towards lowering the average effectiveness of the senses and organs of the body), and to prevent, by killing off the unfit, the perpetuation of their otherwise disastrous peculiarities or weaknesses. In the animal world this law has acted with magnificent results, being the chief if not (as some say) the only means whereby the various orders of life have been improved, and Evolution has been carried forward till the advent of Man. During the earlier career of our own race also, while it was in a state of almost incessant warfare against the brute conditions of survival, and individuals had even to prove their right to exist by being able to hold their own against all rivals, this law tended towards the development of all that was favourable to life and vigour in the physical constitution. But with the dawn of civilisation, the rigour of this law was at once modified, through the fact that the weak were under the protection of the strong; and with the awakening of the finer emotions of sympathy and mutual helpfulness, uncorrected by

the application of the idea of "artificial selection" which Man has applied with such astonishing results in the case of domestic animals, there has been an inevitable tendency towards lowering the general average of physical efficiency in the civilised races. As an instance of this tendency may be mentioned the alarming increase of short-sightedness. In earlier and ruder times, when every man had to fight for his place in the world, those whose eyesight was defective would tend to be overtaken and slain unawares, while the keen-sighted would escape, and not only "live to fight another day," but to perpetuate their fine vision in their descendants, as is well exemplified in the case of the North American Indians. Under present conditions, however, the man of short vision is not incapacitated from the struggle for existence; for not only is such a defect not vitally disqualifying, but mechanical corrections are within the reach of all who suffer from it. Such individuals therefore freely intermarry with those of normal sight, and according to the reading of this law that prevails at present, it tends to a slow but sure degeneration of the average keenness of human vision. The tendency is aggravated by the trying conditions and customs of modern times, which put an increasing strain on such vision as we possess, and so still further hasten the degenerative effects of free intermarriage.

The same law, it is affirmed, is slowly affecting even the longevity of the race. This is a startling statement in view of the fact that the average lease of life is so rapidly extending, according to the vital statistics of all civilised nations. And yet a closer examination of the tables of the Registrar-General brings to light a curious and disquieting fact. The immense comparative increase in the average duration of life is due, we are told, to the lessened rate of infant mortality rather

than to the extending longevity of grown-up people. On the contrary, while the *total* rate is rising, yet if we eliminate the infant section—those under seven years old—and attend only to those who are left, we shall find that the average, instead of being maintained, is actually lessened, even during the comparatively brief period for which statistics are available. In spite, therefore, of the extraordinary precautions that are taken against disease and infection nowadays; in spite also of the rise of a profession which was unknown a century ago—that of Preventive Medicine—we seem to be defeating our own purpose, or at least to be affected by causes which defeat us all the more surely because we have drafted off a particular profession for the sole purpose of conserving and improving the health of the race. Here, again, we are told, the same cause is at work. It is because we are interfering with the law of "natural selection," whose function is to prevent those with vital endowment below the average from perpetuating their own weakness, that we are losing instead of gaining ground against the assaults of disease and death. Unless we discover and rigorously apply some corrective principle, therefore, we shall find that the very influences which, morally speaking, would tend to the advancement of the race, will result in a physical deterioration of the most disastrous kind.[1]

We may, however, venture to assert that there will be a real and marked *mental* evolution of Humanity. As yet, indeed, we can hardly say that Man has begun

[1] See, however, Weismann's "Heredity," II., pp. 22, 23, where he endeavours to point out the limits within which this deterioration can take place without once more calling out the renewed action of the law of Natural Selection. It is doubtful also whether the prophets of ill in this matter have given due weight to the law of 'persistence of type," which tends to the preservation of all physical characteristics once firmly fixed in the constitution of the

as a race to use the peculiar faculties that have been granted him. There is a vast store of mentality even in the higher animals which has not yet been brought to perfection. Some domestic creatures have been taught the rudiments of reason, which they possess to an extent of which in their wild state they showed no signs; the wild horse, dog, cat, etc., are scarcely the same beings as those of their species that have been so profoundly modified by the education of mankind; and certain domestic pets, such as canaries, parrots, and even mice, show an astonishing sensitiveness to the touch of human companionship and training. With all these, however, there are strict and final limits to the capacity for mental evolution; there is a point beyond which all further efforts to raise them are fruitless. But with Man it is not so. He is furnished with an equipment of faculty ample for the developing processes of a million years. His real mental education is only beginning. If we cannot affirm that the high-water mark of mental power is more advanced to-day than in the age of Pericles, we can safely claim that in those countries where popular education has been at work for one generation, the average intelligence is vastly higher than it has ever been in the history of the human race. Knowledge, for long centuries the monopoly of a class, is becoming the heritage of the many; and with knowledge, those secondary benefits which ever follow in its pathway. Suspension of judgment, the faculty for concentrated attention, that inestimable

species. It is a well-known fact that when civilised man is trained to physical exercises, he is quite the equal, if not the superior, of most savage races, even in those arts of war in which the savage is being continually exercised. In any case the process of degeneration spoken of above would take an immense period to act to the real detriment of the race. Apparently, however, it would be bound to tell in the end.

result of expanding mental vision which we call "common-sense," the power of generalisation from particulars to universals, mental balance and proportion —all these are the fruit of expanding education among the masses. High also among intellectual qualities which flower into the moral life is to be placed *foresight*, which may be called the peculiar property of the civilised man. All this is the result of a wider mental culture, and as that process goes on, if only it is directed under the control of still higher safeguards, its benefits ought to increase in geometric, rather than arithmetic, ratio. And whether there be such a thing as the inheritance of acquired aptitudes or not, there are at least the facts that each generation builds largely on the mental acquirements of its predecessors, that the discoveries of one age become the commonplaces of the next, and that no effective advance in knowledge is ever likely to be lost from the grasp of humanity now that the art of printing has made every recorded conquest of the individual mind the permanent possession of the race. And thus, even though the average abilities of the race may not materially increase as time goes on, we may look forward to a real increase of mastery over the faculties which we possess, and this will result in their better use and more effective development.

This mental development will issue in a vast extension of Man's control over the physical universe. The advance made during the last century in this direction is so great that, as we have seen, it has altogether revolutionised the conditions of human life. Immense forces are now harnessed in the service of the race which up till then were either inimical or neutral in their action. Time has been economised to such an extent by better methods of carrying on business, and by the acceleration of industrial processes, that the narrow

limits of a lifetime now hold possibilities of work and experience which could not be contained formerly within the scope of generations of hard toil. The tyranny of distance has been reduced to a minimum by mechanical means of travel; the planet for purposes of intercourse has been reduced to a fraction of its previous size; the "ends of the earth" are now almost within speaking and hearing distance of all of us. Wonderful as are the triumphs that have hitherto been accomplished by these discoveries and inventions, they are probably only a beginning of a process which will end no one knows where. Man's power to transform his environment is so rapidly extending, that the very globe is becoming plastic under his hand; and at last he is entering on that "dominion over the works of" God's "hands" of which the Psalmist spoke as having been given to him so long ago.[1]

Another result of Man's mental expansion is a deepened and clarified knowledge of his own nature. The records of human thought, of Man's wild guesses at the riddle of existence, of his painful efforts to come to a better understanding of his own inner life, have not been made in vain. The systems of philosophy grow old and are elaborated only to be discarded as insufficient to account for the totality of his being. But each leaves its traces, contributes something to the onward march of thought; and if one and all prove insufficient to bring being and thought to the unity which is the *terminus ad quem* of all philosophic thinking, they have done splendid service in shedding light on the strange world within on which Man's consciousness ever plays like an uncertain and fitful glow-worm. Both the possibilities and the limitations of human personality are now beyond measure clearer than when Aristotle

[1] Psalm viii.

wrote, and Plato walked the Academe at Athens. The history of the conception of personality successively arrived at by great thinkers is thus something more than a matter of intellectual interest; it is part of the record whereby we have come to a deeper grasp of our own nature, and to a truer control of our own powers. The development of thought works hand in hand with the struggles of experience, and the hardships of spiritual conflict, to bring Man to that mastery of his own wayward nature which is one of the conditions of mastery over the universe without. In this sense it is idle to deny that Man has "evolved" greatly, even within the short period of which the records remain to us: his being is enriched by the knowledge which he has accumulated; that knowledge has reacted on his life, and made it different from what it was, and from what it would have been had there been no thinkers to perplex him with questions, and to illuminate him with their earnest if insufficient answers. How far Christianity has stirred and carried forward this factor in the intellectual growth of the race is a fruitful and stimulating inquiry; but we have no space here to do more than just hint at the extraordinary impulse it gave to philosophic thought, and the ever-new material it has furnished for further inquiry, by enriching the spiritual nature of Man.[1]

II

But, as we have already seen at an earlier stage of our inquiry, intellectual development does not in itself contain sufficient safeguards against its own abuse. The best educated people are not necessarily the best

[1] On this subject see Illingworth's Bampton Lecture on "Personality, Human and Divine," *passim*.

men; they may be among the worst. Knowledge is power; but power may be misused; in the hands of selfish and unprincipled individuals, it may be transformed into an unmitigated scourge. Unless therefore we have some guarantee that, in the future evolution of the race, there will be other factors at work which will ensure that intellectual advancement will be turned to the benefits of the race, the present swift expansion of knowledge and culture may end in a curse instead of a blessing. Is there any hope or sign that such regulative factors are being developed *pari passu* with education and enlightenment?

Unquestionably there is; and one of them is to be found in the quickening of the *social sense*. Comparing past with present, and drawing from present facts the deductions that seem obviously warranted, we come to the conclusion that the future Evolution of Humanity will be predominantly a *social* and *moral* evolution.

Not that we are to look forward to anything like a neglect of the individual in the ages to come. There are not wanting indications indeed in certain directions, and for the time being, that the interests of the individual are in peril of being lost sight of under the tyranny of the new social instinct. In that passionate reaction against an era of exaggerated individualism which characterises modern social movements, it was only to be expected that something of this kind should take place. It is the penalty of a too rapid advance that it should contain reactionary elements. Unquestionably, there is a tendency in the latest developments of industrial organisation to sit too hard on individual initiative and spontaneous exhibitions of energy. This is one of the secondary and regrettable effects of Tradesunionism, and of the crude Socialism which is advocated in certain quarters. But this tendency is

temporary, and in time it will inevitably tend to correct itself. That emphasis on the infinite value of the individual life and soul which is one of the priceless gifts of Christianity to the world is really at the root of all the social movements of the time. But for the growing conviction that the meanest man has his inalienable rights,—the right to live a life unburdened by intolerable disabilities of poverty and ignorance and filthy surroundings, the right to live his *own* life, and not the life imposed upon him by foolish and cramping limitations of his personal liberties, the right to live the best and freest life possible to him with due regard to the rights of others,—the vast and complicated organisations that are rapidly transforming the social world would lose their prime impulse.

Now it is growing clear that the individual can never live such a life unless present social conditions are made more adaptable and sensitive to the needs of the individual. To improve the social environment, therefore, is one of the pressing tasks of the future. This does not mean that we should aim at a static social condition. A perfect environment can never be static for a society of developing individuals. As men grow, they will ever call for new conditions, and as they get to understand each other and to realise that the interests of each are really the interests of all, they will join more and more amicably to work together for their common end. Reforms and fresh adjustments will be constantly called for, and they will be constantly easier to attain.

The Social Evolution of earlier times was directed mainly (though not of course exclusively) towards easing and bettering the relations between communities as great aggregates; internal adjustments were made mainly that the community or nation might be better

capable of preserving itself against attacks from outside. But with the rise of modern industrialism, and the turning men's minds away from the conflicts of nations towards the competitions of commerce, the changing relations of master and man, employer and employed, introduced a new era of social and moral development. Domestic legislation has gradually taken the first place formerly held by international diplomacy; external treaties being more or less stably arranged, government is predominantly concerned with internal reforms; and the channel of development in future is seen to lie in the relationships within the social organism itself. Not too soon has the attention of statesmen and political reformers been turned in this direction, for with the invention of machinery, and the consequent enormous and revolutionary acceleration of manufacturing processes, new and vital problems were rapidly emerging, and perils to the well-being of society loomed up, vague and vast, calling for immediate treatment. These industrial changes have radically altered the conditions of social life, involving as they do altogether new relationships between man and man, letting loose fresh forces of development, and calling for an extraordinary sensitising of the higher social instincts. One of the marked results of this change has been an entire redistribution and concentration of the population in great and ever-increasing cities, with the pressing problems of poverty and overcrowding which this implies. Another has been a loosening and at the same time an accentuation of the relations between employers and employed. Master and man nowadays do not feel the personal bond as in days of old; the relation tends more and more to become merely a "business" relation; and with deepening need for close co-operation, there is an ever-increasing tendency towards alienation and

irritation. A third vital result of the industrial change is the merging of private enterprises into limited liability companies, whose shareholders are scattered throughout the community, and who never come into personal relations at all with the men who make their wealth. In these and many other subtle ways modern society is being brought face to face with entirely new problems, so different in kind from any that have hitherto existed that almost no light is shed on them by the past course of human history, so that they have to be met and mastered in new ways and by adjustments that only patient thought and a high spirit of social reform can devise and carry out.

Is there any message of comfort and encouragement to be uttered in view of these unfamiliar and pressing social perils? Have we any guarantee that the future evolution of communities and races will run along safe and progressive lines, and not into some yawning gulf of confusion and ruin?

Were it not for the light that streams from one direction, we should have no effective guarantee that the fierce competitions that everywhere rage and fume might not end in an era of steady and fatal social decline. Long before a deepening and uplifting of the social sense was called for by the new conditions, Christianity, they had been softening and refining our national ideals, quickening the sentiment of pity for the fallen and the forsaken, and vastly deepening and broadening the channels of human sympathy In earlier times much of this growing pitifulness and sympathy was directed into mischievous channels; almsgiving seemed to be the only, or at least the chief, way open of ameliorating the evils of society; and an enormous outgrowth of social parasitism was the result. But while these temporary evils have with better organisation passed

largely into the background, the sentiments of which they were the exciting causes as well as the result have remained, and are to-day available for a better and a saner use. Even now we have scarcely tapped the vast resources of human sympathy as a means of realising the possibilities of social progress. Just as there are untold treasures of music in the air, and of colour in the sunshine, and of power among the untutored forces of Nature, waiting to be released at the touch of genius, that they may take their place in the service and for the solace of Man, so there are in the impalpable but electric atmosphere of our social nature potentialities of mutual helpfulness which may yet surprise the pessimists who croak over the rapidly approaching disintegration of society. All that is wanted is some great educative influence that shall call forth and organise these potentialities, that they may be ready and available when wanted.

This we have in Christianity. Hitherto it has been too much identified with the institutions which it has produced, and the channels of individual salvation in which it has mainly energised, for its true social power to be adequately realised. Latterly, however, it has been clear that, great as has been the influence of the Christian revelation in the past in softening the hard relations of men towards one another, it has scarcely begun its true career of social regeneration. A glance at the way in which the teachings of the Gospel are pervading personal and industrial relationships will make this sufficiently clear.

1. The modern development of the *family ideal* is entirely the fruit of Christianity. The emancipation of the wife from a slave or a plaything into a helpmeet and a companion whose very weakness entitles her to a kindlier consideration and a more genuine regard;

the hallowing of the marriage tie into a religious bond, whose ideal is a life-long union between two souls that are to be all in all to one another; the enthronement of the Child into the supreme place in the affections and service of its elders,—all these great results are the outcome of that religion which has spoken its tenderest messages in the language of home, and has embodied its highest revelation of the Divine nature in the conception of the Divine Fatherhood.

2. The mitigation of the horrors of war, and the slow but sure substitution of other and humaner methods of settling international controversies, is another result of Christian training. The Christian law regarding personal controversies is, first, for the two parties to seek reconciliation between themselves; if one of the parties declines this, to call in the help of a third party to mediate; if this fails, to seek the arbitrament of the organised law of society; and in the last resort nothing more militant is permitted than a cessation of friendly relations.[1] This indeed is the Christian model for the settlement of all human disputes. First, reconciliation, involving if necessary that the aggrieved party should be the first to offer it; secondly, conciliation; thirdly, arbitration by a legally constituted tribunal; and lastly, if all else fails, an attitude of neutrality, ever open to renewal of friendly relationships on the basis of a free forgiveness. *Irreconcilable enmity is unknown to Christ.* High above us as this ideal floats, it is astonishing how widely it has already been incorporated, not only in the social sentiment relating to personal affronts, but in the settlement of industrial relations, and even in the relations that bind civilised nations together. It is impossible for us here to go into the matter more fully; the reader who is anxious to do so

[1] Matt. xvii. 15-17.

will find a suggestive guide in Dr. Lyman Abbott's recent work on "Christianity and Social Problems."[1]

3. The law of chastity is also one of the distinctive and priceless boons conferred on the race by Jesus Christ. Most ancient nations were finally shipwrecked on the rock of sensual passion; and it is certain that there is nothing more disastrous in its effects on both the physical and moral stamina of the race than promiscuous and unregulated sexual intercourse. Now apart from the influence of Christianity, there is no prospect that this evil will ever be really kept in check; at present even this influence hardly suffices to restrain it within the bounds of decency; and were our faith not deep that it will succeed, in the end, in imposing its august ideal of chastity upon the unmarried, and of absolute faithfulness to one another on the wedded, we should utterly despair of the continuance and development of modern civilisation.

4. Another result of Christian influence is seen in the new attitude taken towards the lapsed and the criminal. The retributive notion of punishment has given way to the remedial. Offenders against the law are neither tortured nor visited with disproportionate penalties. Youthful criminals are treated as capable of social redemption. The children of criminals are cared for by those who endeavour to bring them up in a clean and civilised manner. Various philanthropic institutions aim at the prevention of crime by teaching and sheltering and uplifting those in peril of falling, whether through the stress of inherited tendencies, or through the pressure of an evil environment. In a thousand ways attempts are being made to deal with the social evils that afflict the civilised world, both the evils that are the heritage of the immemorial past, and those

[1] James Clarke & Co., 1896, especially chaps. ii.—x.

which are the direct result of the new social conditions of the times.

There is here abundant call for thankfulness and hope. But there is also a threatening peril. It is one which we have already touched on in another connection—that of so conserving the undesirable and unfit elements in human society, without providing checks against their perpetuation, as permanently to lower the average quality of the race. This peril is indeed real and even imminent, and it calls for a new development of social honour. A public opinion will have to be created against marriages that can only result in unhealthy, vicious, and depraved offspring; and in the case of those who are beyond the reach of such a refined sentiment, and are physically and morally unfit to be parents, effective means must be found of preventing them from continuing their species. This we fear is an ideal still distant. At present indeed the laws of healthy physical generation are so obscure to the eye of science, that it would be folly to attempt any formal interference with the impulses of nature in the choice of partners; and it may be long before the needful light will arise. But in the end some such regulation of sexual relations in doubtful cases will have to come, if the race is not to deteriorate in soul and mind as well as body.

III

We thus come naturally to our third and last point as regards the future evolution of Man on earth. *It will be pre-eminently a religious or spiritual one.*

We are aware that there are prominent writers who affirm confidently that the very reverse of this will be the case. Looking at religion as a passing stage

in the development of the race, they teach that it must lose its hold as the conditions which brought it into being pass away. Were religion and superstition synonymous terms, this would be the case; and the result would equally follow if it were true that science had sounded the death-knell of a belief in the supernatural element which is one of the inalienable factors in religion. We hold that neither of these passing hypotheses are true. Christianity is demonstrably separable from the superstitions with which it has from time to time been weighted; but it is clearer than ever that its witness to the supernatural is incapable of being explained away. It is equally clear that it is deepening rather than slackening its hold on the best life of the world; and that the religious instincts of the race, so far from being in their dotage, are really as yet in their early stage of Evolution. If indeed we find reason to think that Man, as mental, has reached in a sense his stature, and looks forward now to a development that is mainly elaborative of the faculties which he has, rather than to the acquisition of new faculties, and if he is in a state of half-evolved stature as social, it is we believe unquestionable that, as religious, he is still in a state of infancy.

And how is he as a creature to develop spiritually? It must and can only be, first, by receiving larger stores of vitality, and secondly, by getting more in touch with the true environment in which his life is nourished. And, as we have seen, the true source and the true environment of the soul of Man are in God.[1] To be in ever-closer touch with the Father of Lights; to develop and multiply those intimate relationships with Him which are the soul's breath and joy; to come to know Him, and to love Him, and love what He loves; to

[1] Acts xvii. 28.

make His will our will, and find our meat and our drink in the doing of that will which is holy and righteous and good,—this is to be spiritually minded, and it is this which not only gives the richest and fullest sense of life in every way, but is the only assurance we can possibly have of a blessed immortality in the world to come. How then to come into these Divine intimacies is the great question. And the answer is to be found, if at all, only in the practical acceptance of Christianity. Here is the authentic message of God to Man, and Christ is the embodiment of that message. Son of God—Incarnate Word—Himself, He brought the principle of spiritual life within the reach of all, and showed the way whereby the breach between Man and his Maker might be reconciled, the process of degeneration not only arrested but reversed, and a new evolution started which will undo the work of the Fall. This He gave assurance of by His own Resurrection and Ascension. Though He has disappeared so far as bodily presence is concerned, He is still energising the world by His Spirit, first in the hearts of individual believers, then in the Church which He established, and thirdly in the diffused influence which He exercises over the minds of men and the progress of the world. He revealed a new type of character, which a foremost Evolutionist, speaking not as a believer in Revelation, but purely as a scientific man, shows to be the very kind of character which is approved by the trend of Evolution as the future type of development in human relations both in the individual and in society. He pointed out the need for a New Birth into the "kingdom of God" as the condition of the beginning of this higher life; and He promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to all those who are willing to give themselves up to His guidance, and to accept the illumination and uplifting of His presence in their soul.

It would be an interesting line of inquiry to follow out the development of this "Christ-influence" in the history of the ages, and to measure its range and depth in the life of to-day. To do this adequately, however, would require the scope of a large volume, and only a suggestive and final word can here be said. From the time when the Risen Lord said to His disciples at the hour of His departure from them, "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth," to the present day, all that has been most heroic in life, all that has been most progressive in thought, all that has told best for social and political emancipation, all that is sweetest and most beautiful in character, has been the direct or indirect fruit of that blessed influence. Far beyond the circumference of His Church and the conscious effect of His teaching and Person, that influence has swept; like the viewless wind it has penetrated into the most unsuspected places, bearing on its wings the seeds of a loftier thinking, the potencies of a Diviner life. Modern civilisation, in so far as it is distinctive and vital, is so in virtue of the fact that it has incorporated within its vast activities and varied institutions some of the Christ-Idea, and taken on some of the impress of the Christ-heart. We cannot, if we would, get away from Jesus Christ, any more than we can get away from the light that filters through the air we breathe and makes beautiful the soil on which we tread. He has impregnated the life of Humanity with the quality of His own. Not yet, alas! has He come to His own; not yet is He King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. But His kingdom is coming, "without observation" except in cyclic changes, and with many a temporary lapse and ebb which sadden the hearts of those who love Him best; it is coming, and that none the less surely because it seldom moves along the paths we would mark out

for Him, or in ways that we can at the time recognise. As when the image of the descended sun remains on the eye, so "Christ has once for all fixed the attention of the world on Himself, and henceforth it can never get His Divine form out of His vision. He is imprinted for ever upon the mental retina of the race, and one must continue to look upon the soul, and human society, and God Himself, with eyes that have Christ burned into their substance."[1] The fidelities of Science, the glories of Art, the expanding ideals of national life, the inspirations of conduct, the hopes that fill the heart in the hour of its most ecstatic visions—all bear the impress, and partake of the quality, of the quiet Figure whose voice was not lifted in the streets, but whose Presence is fast filling the earth with its perfume and its joy. Whatever may or may not be prophesied with confidence in this uncertain world, this at least is safe to say, that the empire of Jesus is swiftly extending, and that the one hope of Humanity is that it may become universal and complete.

IV

BUT here, at the very ridge of this outlook on a glorious future for Humanity in this world, we are met with a chill wind that blows out of the very gates of the sunrise into which we are so eagerly gazing, and a cloud, at first small as a man's hand, begins rapidly to spread over the heavens. We have been so far dealing with that future as though it had no limit, or at least as though the horizon which bounds it melted into a rich and pearly heaven, on which the cloud-battlements of the New Jerusalem, the City of God, hang in unspeakable

[1] "The Christ of To-day," by George A. Gordon, Minister of the Old South Church, Boston, U.S.A., pp. 52, 53.

splendours of colour and form. This has ever been the normal horizon of the Christian consciousness. There is to be a New Heaven and a New Earth, in which dwelleth righteousness; and after that, a glorified and beauteous Society of the Redeemed in the spiritual presence of God, after the physical heaven and earth are rolled up like a scroll, their function done and their work accomplished in the plans of the Eternal.

And now, at the very zenith of our hopes, comes the voice of physical Science with a cheerless foreboding, and a confident prophecy of ill things to come. The fate of the material universe, according to the speculations of inspired writers, was that it should be burnt up in a great catastrophic cataclysm, when the drama of human life had been brought to its climax. Just as once in the course of history the order of nature had been interrupted in order to mark the Divine displeasure against the wickedness of the human race, so in the fulness of time it would be finally destroyed by fire, because its function was completed as the theatre for the spiritual evolution of the race. "There were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up."[1] The progress of science has,

[1] 2 Peter iii. 5-7, 10. We quote these words as being significant not because we lay stress on the particular form which this catastrophic event takes in the imagination of the writer, but as indicating

however, opened up a very different vista of the future of the physical universe. If, so far, we may reasonably hold that Man is the moral climax of creation, and that we shall never see another and loftier race of beings usurping his position of supremacy on the earth, we are debarred from believing any longer that his reign is to last "while the earth endureth." The appearance of the human race on the planet is not so much the *dénouement* of Evolution, as a highly interesting and splendid episode in that Evolution. Long as has been the career of Man, there was an inconceivably longer period when he was not, because the conditions for his existence had not yet arrived; and long as may be the period of development yet to be accomplished in him, the time will assuredly come when he is not on the earth, because the conditions favourable to his existence will have passed away. The whole physical universe, according to the physicist, is undergoing a process of cooling: from the fiery star-mist of the illimitable past, it was a long step to the temperate conditions of the present; it may take a still longer time ere the further process of cooling will have made the physical climate too cold to maintain life; but that time will inevitably come. Slowly the stores of the earth's heat will be dissipated into the vast spaces around; as this goes on, a glacial cold will gradually freeze into the heart of the planet; the higher orders of life will gradually be weeded off by the unfavourable environment, and will be succeeded by lower orders, till at last, by a kind of reversed process of Evolution, all life will die out again, and the earth be given up to a gloomy solitude and icy barrenness. The friction of the

a belief which has ever been the boundary-line of the Christian outlook on the future of the planet—the belief, that is, that the physical world existed for Man, and that when Man's moral probation is at an end, it will be resolved into its elements and turned to other uses

tides will, little by little, retard the earth's motion round her own axis, till, like the moon, she swings idly in the void, ever turning only one side to the sun, while the other is wrapped in a perpetual night. The very sun will, later on, come to a similar fate, his stores of heat giving out completely by slow radiation ; and finally the whole solar system will be a collection of dead worlds, wheeling in the depths of utter darkness through trackless wastes of sky.

It may be urged that this picture of the distant future is one that need not give us any disquiet, just because it is so immeasurably distant. It may also be urged that it is hypothetical, and that with a deeper insight into the hidden forces of the universe we shall come on a principle of renewal which has not yet been unfolded to the eye of the physicist. This is unquestionably possible. In the meantime we have to deal with the problem as it presents itself to us, and the prospect is one that is not without a distinctly chilling influence on the imagination. We do not like to lose hold on the future, or think of a time when the earth that has been given to us for our home and our empire will be once more handed over to brute forces out of whose grasp we have wrested, and in a sense redeemed, it to our service. And from the side of scientific speculation, no light seems possible, except to a modified extent, and in one direction. Our empire over matter and force has been extending in such a startling manner of recent years, and the possibilities of further developments are so immense and dazzling, that we know not where they may end. We have already changed the climate of many a country, and altered the face of the planet, by our manipulation of natural forces. It is well within the reach of possibility that we may come upon secrets which will vastly increase this power, and so by

a wise economy of, and prudent interference with, the wasteful processes of nature be able to conserve for our own purposes the forces that are now being dissipated. If so, we may look forward to a great extension of the period during which the race shall exist on the planet. But even so, there must be a limit to the presence and reign of Man on the earth, and a time will come when his course will be run, and the universe as we know it be handed over to the forces of decay and death.

To the Christian believer, however, this need be no matter of concern or regret. He believes that there is a Personal and Ever-blessed God who is at the helm of the universe, and that "He who made it will guide." To him it must ever be inconceivable that the drama of creation, having so clearly a moral and spiritual goal to it, should ever end in an anti-climax so futile as that which the physicist seems forced to believe in. Those spacious heavens and this "blossoming world" were not brought out of the womb of nothingness in order to be swallowed up once more in a pitchy and eternal night, in which there shall be no eye to see their glory, no heart to pulse in response to their order and beauty. As the present order certainly had a beginning, so it may well come to an end. But that end will be a great and a glorious end, commensurate with the Mind that planned, and the Will that accomplished, and the Love that has brooded over all its troubled but splendid history. If the present physical order ever becomes unnecessary to the further completion of the Divine purpose, then we who believe that we shall remain because God remains, and live because Christ lives, can afford without any loss of hope or faith or activity to look forward to the passing away of all outward things. When we are attaining "other heights in other lives," in the fulness of the Presence, and in unbroken

communion with all that is permanently fair and good, we shall ever think with fondness of the Old Home in which we first came to birth, and had our first childish trials and struggles, and wrestled with the powers of darkness and sin, and rose to victory through the love that redeemed us,—even though that Home be fallen into ruin and decay. Surely no perfected spirit which once walked the ways of this green earth will ever forget the wandering star made sacred by the footsteps of the Son of God, nor the "green hill far away" on which the "dear Lord was crucified, and died to save us all." But God is greater than the universe, and it is "in Him we live, and move, and have our true being." Whether it be the fate of the earth and the stars, according to the old faith, to be burnt up, or according to the new, to be frozen up, we believe that He who made them can, and if needful for His gracious purposes will, remake out of their worn-out materials other worlds for fairer ends. As for us, we shall have had our day here, and our children, and our children's children, to uncountable ages yet to come; and out of this life, we shall have been raised up into the more glorious life above. If that is sure, nothing else matters; God rules, and of His empire there shall be no end. "Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the DAY OF GOD?"[1]

The refuge from Pessimism, in view of the perishable nature of human life and of the certain dissolution of the present order of things, is thus found in a clearer view of the issues of created existence, and the certainty offered to faith that nothing worthy of eternal continuance can ever perish so long as "God and the Soul endure."

[1] 2 Peter iii. 11.

"And so, beside the Silent Sea,
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

WHITTIER.

Chapter IV.—Behind the Veil

Does Death end Probation always and for all?—Reasons for reopening the Question—What does the Bible teach?—Conditions of an Adequate Moral Probation—Subjective and Objective Conditions of the Future Life.

I

GRANTED that an acceptance of the Theory of Evolution does not imperil faith in the Christian doctrine of immortality, we have yet to ask whether it modifies our views of future destiny. And, first, as to the vexed problem whether Death ends Human Probation.

Up till recently it seems to have been taken for granted by the vast majority of Christian believers that this question must be answered in the affirmative. This life was believed to be the only theatre of moral probation for the race. Our future destiny was to be entirely determined by the manner in which we lived in this short span of life. No second chance would be given to any one. Eternal blessedness for the good, eternal woe for the wicked—this was the doom of all; and that doom was contingent on the state of the soul in the solemn hour of the dissolution of the bodily life.

It is useless to deny that there has been a slow and widespread change of late years in the Protestant attitude on this vital matter. So far it has been an

alteration of mood rather than of conviction; the change has scarcely passed into the self-conscious, much less the rational, stage of thought. None the less has it been real and far-reaching; and it is beginning to have profound influence on the temper and bearing of believers towards those who have not yet accepted the Christian faith, or who have taken up an attitude of hostility towards it, or who have not yet had an opportunity of accepting it. To what are we to attribute this drift of sentiment and feeling?

It is doubtless explained by some of those who cling strenuously to older views as the direct outcome of unbelief and a neglect of the teaching of the Scriptures. Granted that this may be so in the case of those who have lost their faith in the authority of the Sacred Book, and have gone after other lights, it does not explain the fact that there is a no less obvious change in the attitude of many of the most devout and earnest believers in the Christian revelation, and that we are all more or less affected by it. The question, indeed, is being asked all round, *Does* Scripture really teach that death ends all probation? and it is asked by thinkers who are in no way tainted by the spirit of scepticism. They feel the problem with a new emphasis, and the old solution weighs with the gloom of a nightmare on their hearts. Let us try to account for this fact.

1. To begin with, there has recently been an extraordinary expansion in our outlook on the past career of humanity on this planet. Instead of a vista of six thousand years since the first man appeared, we now look back to a point so remote that we cannot possibly call up a mental picture corresponding to it. For untold ages our race has been here, fighting with the brute conditions of existence in the earliest stages of all, slowly reaching out to a rudimentary civilisation and a

dawning spiritual life, leaving traces of its weapons and its habits and its worship in the tombs of its dead and the ruins of its habitations ; and all this in times so far removed from the limits which we dignify by the name "historic," that we can only calculate their distance and their duration by geologic measurements. That word "historic," also, has been expanded into meanings which make our paltry centuries seem but as yesterday. When we hear that there are certain proofs of a civilisation of a high order existing in Egypt long before the time when Adam, according to the old chronology, was supposed to be eating of the forbidden fruit in Eden, and that indications are not wanting that this civilisation was built up on the ruins of another which must have been almost inconceivably ancient, the sense of our racial continuity becomes oppressive in its magnitude and weight. Side by side with this we have to place the fact that the stream of historic revelation which culminates in Jesus Christ does not, so far as our information goes, carry us back appreciably beyond the limits hitherto accepted ; and we are faced by the searching question, In what sense can we speak of death as having determined the final destiny of this vast multitude of men and women who lived without any knowledge of the standard to which they must conform, or of the Saviour whose life was to be their ideal and whose cross was to be their hope? It is scarcely an answer to be told that they will all be judged "according to their light" ; for in the face of the lofty ideal of the New Testament, what kind of light can we call that which shone on Palaeolithic and Neolithic Man? and if that light was enough for them, what need was there for so much more for us, "on whom the ends of the ages have come"? Does it not seem that *they* needed more, since *we* often feel as though we scarcely have

enough? And does not this imply that if God is good, and if Christ is to be the judge of the whole earth, these shadowy multitudes of the past must have some further chance of coming into the full light, and of making the Great Choice?

2. The same idea is forced on our consideration by the broadening sense of a *contemporary* humanity which has been brought home to us of late years. Only a short while ago, comparatively speaking, Christian peoples were in almost total ignorance of the greater world outside. What a contrast has been brought to light by the results of missionary enterprise, of adventure and travel, of commercial and political intercourse, of scholarly study into the civilisation, the religions, the languages, and the philosophies of "heathen" nations! and how mean the crude classifications of earlier and simpler times strike us in the light of the rich and varied moral and spiritual life of many non-Christian people! True, it is being proved experimentally and beyond doubt that till these races accept Christ they will never come to their rightful spiritual heritage, and that the civilisations of which they boast are non-progressive till their sleeping enthusiasms and their hidden potentialities are awakened by the quickening touch of the Christian faith. The future of the whole race is indissolubly bound up with its willingness to receive the Gospel, and will be determined in this life as well as in the world to come by this supreme test. But this very fact suggests that these outside peoples, not having hitherto had the chance to accept the Saviour who alone can redeem them, cannot have their eternal destinies settled apart from the offer of that salvation; and as regards those who as yet are in that position, we are driven by what seems the sheerest moral logic to believe that some means will be found in the eternal world which has not been given

to them here whereby the opportunity of acceptance or rejection will be offered to each and all.

3. By way of carrying home this conviction, there is the ever-deepening sensitising of the humanitarian sympathies that is going on in the Christian consciousness. The feeling of moral solidarity which links us to the savage and the alien in race and religion is becoming more and more accentuated. The better men know each other under the inspiration of religious ideals, the more is the unity of all mankind borne in on them. The middle wall of partition is breaking down which divided the races and the peoples of the earth. The distinctions of blood, of caste, of civilisation, of education, and of culture are seen to be accidental; they do not run to the roots of human life; there is a point in human intercourse beyond which they do not count. When everything has been said, we are after all *men*, and as such we all have a right to the same chance in those supreme matters which concern our eternal destiny. And as this chance demonstrably does not come to all alike in this life, can it be that there is any inequality Here which is not rectified Hereafter?

4. When we turn our eyes from the differences that meet us in a general survey of human life to those that exist among individuals, with their diverse temperaments and varying opportunities, the difficulty attacks us from a new side, and comes home to us with keener edge. Not even in Christian countries, under similar conditions of social and educational environment, not even under the same roof-tree, are we placed under an absolutely equal *regime* of spiritual training and discipline. When we consider the subtle differences that divide us as regards our hereditary tendencies, our unconscious response to influence, the impress left upon us by the same presentation of truth, the same outward guidance;

when we remember what, humanly speaking, we may call the haphazard way in which the determining factors of life take their place in the stream of experience, and how the best of us has to feel half blindly for the solution of the most vital problems; when we look back at the critical moments in our own past, and realise how in some of them the final "push" was given to our choices by seemingly accidental events and influences,—then the difficulty of spiritual classification becomes immeasurably intensified. Some of us appear to have all needful opportunity to come to a knowledge of the truth; we can hardly conceive circumstances more favourable to a deliberate and final moral choice. Others seem to be followed by a perpetual disqualification; they do not have a fair chance; their environment, or the drag of a congenial quality, or the bafflement of a thwarting circumstance, continually interferes with their moral development, and turns their life into failure and ruin. Without for a moment allowing that there is not a margin of moral choice left to the most unfortunate and degraded, which is a true sphere of probation, it is difficult to believe that difference of temperament and environment does not handicap some to an extent that makes effective and final moral choice a matter of extreme difficulty.

5. The peculiarly uncertain incidence of death, coming on men at all stages of moral development, and age, and circumstance, presents another difficulty to believing this life to be the only arena of probation. Some are gathered in at a ripe old age, with the full circle of their human experience and relationships completed; others are cut off in early youth, or in the midst of their days. Some have come into the fullest light, and have had the largest opportunity to face the alternatives of the spiritual life; to others the call comes when their

character is in an inchoate condition and the determining factors of life are in solution. A long illness precedes the end in the case of many; but large multitudes are hurried into eternity without a moment's warning. It is a natural and pressing question, Can the eternal destiny of the soul be always determined by an event whose law is so hidden, and which comes in a manner so entirely out of relation to the condition of the soul at the time of its occurrence?

6. And what, on the theory we are considering, is to become of the untold multitudes of those who die in infancy? Setting aside as a worn-out superstition the theory of the eternal loss of those who are unbaptised, can we with any real conviction believe that little children who pass into the unseen before they have come to years of discretion are really fixed in that condition for ever? It has been calculated that at least one-third of the total population of the world die in this undeveloped state. This is true of the present; in times past the proportion must have been vastly larger, especially in the prehistoric period, when infanticide was common, and the chances of survival were in all cases far poorer than now. An immense portion of the race therefore has never had a chance of choosing between good and evil in this life. This is not a question of surmise, but of absolute certainty. And yet each of this countless host had in him the capacity of moral character, which can only be gained by free choice of good and free rejection of evil. How are we to conceive of the future for these little ones, of whom it was said by the Saviour, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"?[1] As a recent writer on this subject says: "If those who die in infancy are immortal, it is plain

[1] Matt. xix. 14.

that the undeveloped state in which they enter the other life cannot be permanent. Infants must come to maturity, character must be attained, and life must have its moral significance; but all this must come to pass in the other world. For infants, if they are immortal, the future life is the only sphere of moral action, responsibility, and spiritual growth. We thus come to the startling fact that for perhaps one-third of mankind the entire life of conscious and developed personality is lived in the other world, and that there alone is any conscious experience of the grace of God possible to them."[1] We seem driven to this conclusion without any alternative. If so, are we not also driven farther? If in one case there is no choice but to believe that where no chance at all has been given here for moral probation there must be one Yonder, what of those other innumerable instances where the chance here is so demonstrably incomplete and imperfect? We can hardly stop at the first concession.

For these and other reasons, the enlarged outlook of modern times on the Providential Order of life is slowly but surely sapping the foundation of the old belief that Death must in all cases determine the final and eternal destiny of the soul of Man. As we have already suggested, it is a change that so far has been instinctive rather than rational; the former belief is being unconsciously even when not openly given up, and many would shrink from confessing their disbelief whose whole attitude is inconsistent with the position in which they were brought up. The reason for this diffidence is probably a rooted suspicion that the Christian Scriptures teach openly that all human probation ends with this life.

[1] "An Outline of Christian Theology" (W. N. Clarke), p. 419.

II

THE question then becomes a burning one, Does the New Testament really teach this doctrine in an unmistakable way? It has hitherto been taken for granted by most people that it does. But a great many old views once thought to be based purely on Scriptural authority are now seen to have been really built up on shallow preconceptions and imperfect exegesis. Every generation brings its ignorance as well as its knowledge to bear on all Biblical questions, and solves them according to its light. Especially does the emphasis placed on this text or the other affect the conclusions to which we may come; and emphasis is a factor in interpretation which has never yet been reduced to a science, being really a matter of predisposition rather than of rational thought, even with the best minds. In view therefore of the constant developments and readjustments of thought, and of the immense expansions of outlook that have been granted to this generation in all directions, it is needful that we should reopen this matter without prejudice. Have we therefore any warrant for thinking that Scripture teaches this life to be equally for all the only theatre of moral probation?

In approaching this question, we should also remember that the way in which this and all other problems is dealt with in Scripture is governed largely by the circumstances and outlooks of the times. Those who were the channels of revelation were troubled by problems that have lost all meaning for us; and they knew nothing of many others that are a cause of deep perplexity and pain to the present generation. While thus the Gospel is for all time, and contains all the light and truth needful for the illumination of every

age and land, it is only gradually, as new conditions arise, that we are able to appropriate this light and truth and make it fully our own. Wider horizons call for ampler interpretations. In all other directions this is being done. On this question we must expect no less.

In the first place, we have to consider the problem whether an adequate probation is possible apart from a full knowledge of the Gospel. On this question considerable diversity of opinion exists. Many prominent writers maintain that men are capable of effective and final moral choice without such knowledge, and suggest that in the darkest heathen consciousness there is enough moral light to give the soul permanent bent towards good or evil. There is one passage of Scripture to which appeal is made in proof of this position. St. Paul, in dealing with the difference of opportunity between Jew and Gentile, says: "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law; for not the hearers of a law are just before God, but the doers of a law shall be justified: for when Gentiles which have no law do by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my Gospel, by Jesus Christ."[1] Prof. Agar Beet, in commenting on this passage, affirms that here "we have a standard other than the Gospel by which will be determined the awards of the Judgment Day";[2] and goes on to say: "If, as Paul implies, there is for each one in the present life an

[1] Rom. ii. 12-16. [2] "The Last Things," p. 222.

adequate probation, *i.e.* a sufficient test of his loyalty to that which he knows to be right and good, we have no need or right to expect a probation after death." It is more than doubtful if so large and sweeping an interpretation can be put on this utterance. Principal Moule, in his luminous exposition on the Epistle to the Romans, says with more moderation: "The main import of the paragraph is plain. It is to enforce the fact of the accountability of the Jew and the Gentile alike, from the point of view of law. The Gentile possesses as man that moral consciousness without which the revealed code itself would be futile, for it would correspond to nothing. Made in the image of God, he has the mysterious sense which sees, feels, handles moral obligation. He is aware of the fact of duty. Not living up to what he is thus aware of, he is guilty."[1] Dealing with the fourteenth verse, he says that, "read in the whole connection, it only asserts that the pagan acts as a moral being; that he knows what it is to obey, and to resist, the sense of duty." The passage does not affirm nor does it deny the possibility of probation after death to some of the human race; St. Paul, indeed, seems to have in his mind the enlightened Greek, with his highly developed moral sense and educated intellect, rather than the heathen races as a whole. The contrast is drawn, at any rate, between Jew and Gentile, and not between Christian and Heathen, and should be read in the light of this limitation.

Arguing from practically the same standpoint as Prof. Beet, Prof. Salmond in his masterly work on the future life says: "The probation on which the judgment proceeds is not necessarily of one kind or measure. The probation which lies in opportunities of conscious acceptance or rejection of the revelation of God's grace in

[1] "Expositor's Bible," pp. 65, 66.

Christ may be its highest form. But it need not be the only form. Probation, the testing of life and disposition, exists wherever moral law exists."[1] This passage seems to us ambiguous. If it means that there are grades of efficiency in various kinds of probation, it is reduced to the level of a self-evident proposition. If, on the other hand, it means, *e.g.*, that the kind of probation enjoyed by a South Sea cannibal is sufficient to enable him to make a final choice between good and evil in the sense revealed in the Gospel, and that his eternal destiny after death must be determined according to his attitude towards a code of ethics which makes a virtue of murder and adultery, and accords the successful liar the highest place in the "moral" judgment of his fellows,—this is an affirmation from which we should warmly dissent. Such a position seems to go perilously near to erasing the fundamental nature of the distinction between right and wrong, while it derogates from the dignity of the moral law, and emasculates the missionary motive of its extreme urgency. To affirm that every human being is truly a subject for moral probation of a kind is one thing; to say that this probation is in every case a sufficient test of character by which to adjudicate the final place of men in the eternal world is quite another. We may consistently hold the former view, while rejecting the latter.

The problem, then, reduces itself to this: In what does adequate moral probation consist? We hold, with Dr. Clemance, in opposition with Prof. Beet, that "no human spirit reaches the crucial point of its probation till it has come into contact with the claims of Jesus Christ for acceptance or rejection."[2] That is to say, there can be no final and ultimate test of character till

[1] "The Christian Doctrine of Immortality," p. 669.
[2] "Future Punishment," p. 16.

the full implications of the spiritual life are realised by the soul, and this can never be till the highest revelation of God and Man in their mutual relations is brought to bear on the moral sense, and adequately presented to the will for acceptance or rejection. It was the purpose of the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Resurrection of our Lord to do this. Christ revealed God to Man as the Eternal and All-holy Father, who loves His children and would redeem them from sin and death; He revealed Man to himself in all his actual sinfulness and his ideal possibilities; and He revealed the way by which Man may become reconciled to God, and so enter on the full privileges of the Perfect Life. Dr. Beet asserts that the supposition "that none will be saved except those who by conscious faith accept the Gospel of Christ . . . has no foundation in the teaching of Christ and His apostles."[1] Granted that it receives no distinct statement in the Gospel records,—is it not rather the assumption on which the whole revelation depends as its rationale and foundation? And are there not words here and there which more than suggest such a postulate? We are told that God "willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth";[2] that "he that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on Him";[3] and that "the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life."[4] Conscious acceptance of the Saviour is everywhere assumed as being the condition of salvation in the New Testament sense: "with the heart Man

[1] "The Last Things," p. 222.
[2] 1 Tim. ii. 4.
[3] John iii. 36.
[4] 1 John v. 11, 12.

believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation";[1] "in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved";[2] "believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved."[3] To present Christ to men, indeed, is the one foundation of preaching and all spiritual instruction as unfolded in the New Testament. The same truth is implied in the very meaning of the word "salvation," which refers to a condition of character in which the Highest Good, *i.e.* holiness in Christ, is appropriated. "Unless," therefore, "salvation is to be a magical process, a sovereign act of God outside the human will altogether, we cannot imagine the Lord Jesus Christ saving men irrespectively of their attitude towards Himself, nor can we think that a salvation which in its deepest elements means moral and spiritual regeneration of the heart, a salvation, in a word, that is profoundly ethical in its fruit, can come to any man independently of his attitude towards Christ. Repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are not accidental conditions which are appended to the offer of mercy, and which may or may not be insisted upon; they are the necessary moral and spiritual conditions on which the bestowal of the Divine gift itself depends, and without which Jesus Christ Himself cannot save the soul."[4]

When we approach the Scriptural teaching on the question of future probation from this point of view, we are at once struck with the paucity of material for

[1] Rom. x. 10 (*v.* whole passage).
[2] Acts iv. 12: cf. x. 43.
[3] Acts xvi. 31.
[4] "The Intermediate State," by Dr. Geo. S. Barrett, p. 84. Dr. Barrett's treatment of this question is worthy of careful consideration (pp. 80-97).

the formation of a positive judgment. The alleged parables of judgment, for instance, do not lend themselves to this purpose in the way taken for granted by the older exegetes, who found an eschatological element in all of them. They present us rather with the laws at work in the Kingdom of God, whether here or in the great future. They unfold the conditions of entrance into this Kingdom which Jesus came to establish, with the call to service, the quality of motives, the use of opportunities, the perils of neglect, the need for diligence and watchfulness and humility. Each of them, it is true, closes with a word of warning, or a pronouncement of a punishment for the transgression of the particular aspect of duty enforced in the parable; but the theory that the close of opportunity in each case is the hour of death has been imported into them, and is not fairly deducible from them. In no case is there a clear suggestion that the "coming of the Son of Man," or any of the equivalent phrases, really refers to the death of the body. It is either the "second coming" or the "final judgment" which is clearly referred to; and neither of these events must be confounded with the close of our individual lives on earth.

There is, we believe, only one seeming exception to this statement, and it is worth considering a little more in detail. In the parable of Lazarus and Dives there is an apparently clear reference to death as a dividing line, in some sense or other, between the periods of opportunity and retribution. The Rich man earnestly desires to return to earth that he may warn his brethren of the terrible punishment of sin in the life to come, and the Poor man is represented as having been taken at once into the bosom of Abraham. But there is no hint given to us that the parable is meant to affirm this to be true of all men. Every parable must be inter-

preted in accordance with the central motive which governs it. In this case the truth to be emphasised is quite other than the finality of death as regards human probation. It is a far more terrible doctrine than that. The parable teaches us that *long before death* the final doom of some people may be already settled. They have arrived at that state in which no further revelation of the will of God and of the solemnity of life's choices, even though these be emphasised by the rising of a near relative from the dead by way of warning, would be of any avail.[1] *These five brothers of Dives had already passed the crisis of moral choice.* In face of the full and sufficient light granted to them they had rejected the better part. The Divine resources of appeal had in their case been exhausted ; not death had settled their doom, but life ; the only function of death in their case would be to unfold their hidden condition, and bring the retributive process to a head.

This brings us to a statement of what seems to us the real Scriptural doctrine of finality. Right through we are taught that life is a real probation, and that a judgment is passed on the earthly life of all men in so far as they are awake to moral distinctions. It is also distinctly implied that all men must in the end come to a final determination between the alternatives of moral choice. To every son of Adam the crucial moment will come at last, when, in the full light of the Divine truth, he must decide for "blessing or cursing, life or death." That hour must be when he is face to face with an effective presentation of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, who is to be his Judge.[2] If so, this may be with many—nay, it may well

[1] Luke xvi. 27, 31.

[2] The *impasse* into which the contrary doctrine leads us is well stated in Dahle's "Life after Death," pp. 184, 185.

be so with all who have come into the full radiance of the Gospel—in this life. We have no guarantee that future conditions of existence will for these contain any clearer light, any more potent motives for repentance, than have been brought to bear upon them here and now. The probabilities are all the other way. It is not easy to imagine a more complete chance than is given to multitudes in the life that now is. But just as hard is it to believe that this is so with vast multitudes who have never heard of Christ, and who die in a spiritual darkness that may be felt; and with all those on whom death comes when they are in a state of moral flux and uncertainty. There does not appear to be anything in the nature of death as such which negatives the possibility of a moral change; it is not like the character of God as revealed in Jesus Christ to put an artificial barrier in the way of repentance, if change be possible in the nature of the case; the final opposition must be on our side, and not on His; and till that point has been reached we cannot but think that the way of life is open on His side. The doctrine of Divine love would seem to carry on its face the corollary that it is eternal, and that its privileges and saving power will never be withdrawn except by the voluntary and final refusal of those who have chosen evil as their everlasting portion.

So much seems fairly deducible from the general implications as well as the silences of Scripture on the question of human destiny. It is not easy, however, to deduce either from the words of the Bible or from the constitution of human nature the doctrine of final salvation for all mankind. There are, it is true, some passages which seem to tell in that direction.[1] Against

[1] John xii. 32; Rom. v. 12-21; Phil. ii. 9-11; Eph. i. 9-10; Col. i. 19-26.

these, however, must be placed other passages almost equally decisive,[1] which dwell on the finality of moral choices, and suggest no gleam of hope that all will finally accept the offer of salvation made in Christ. There are two final barriers to the acceptance of the doctrine of final restoration,—at least to the present writer. They are, first, the nature of freewill; and, secondly, the destructive effects of sin on the soul that is fully given over to its power.

In Dr. George Gordon's able and stimulating little work on "Immortality and the New Theodicy" both these central facts of human life are dealt with in the interests of the theory of Final Restoration. He says that the movement of the race from potential into actual and perfected manhood "is possible only on three assumptions: first, that God is Infinite Reason; secondly, that men are essentially and permanently reasonable beings; thirdly, that the goal of the Divine purpose is the highest good of the race."[2] The first assumption, according to this writer, assumes the doctrine that "freedom is the same as rational necessity,"[3] and that "determinism is nothing other than the victorious march of the Divine persuasions in behalf of the highest good of mankind." "Certainly," he says, "as a matter of fact, the power to resist temporarily the Divine persuasions is lodged in man; but this is in consequence of the irrationality that he has brought up with him from the animal world. . . . . The power to resist the immediate realisation of the best wisdom of the world cannot surely be defined as the essence of freedom. This is simply the defect of man, the irrationality out

[1] Dan. xii. 2; Mark ix. 43, 48; Matt. xxv. 41, 46; Rev. xiv. 11, xxii. 11; etc.
[2] Page 100.
[3] *Ibid.*

of which come all the retarding forces of human society." As regards the second of the above propositions, he says: "The question on hand is the nature of freedom as related to determinism. And it must be repeated that determinism simply means that, inasmuch as God is a reasonable Being, and proposes for man a reasonable good, and inasmuch as man is essentially and permanently a reasonable creature, it would appear that the Divine persuasions must be finally availing."[1] The fallacy here appears to lie in this second assumption,—that man is essentially and *permanently* a rational creature, *in the sense that he is sure in the end to choose the highest moral good revealed to him.* The author offers no proof of this; he simply affirms it. If the choice of goodness depended ultimately on man's rational nature, it would be a matter of illumination, not of persuasion. The use of the latter term suggests rather that this choice depends on other than rational elements, as is undoubtedly the case. It depends on the will, not on the reason, as is seen in the fact that many of the worst men have been thoroughly "illuminated" intellectually and spiritually, and yet, because of their depraved will, this illumination has but deepened both their inward depravity and their objective power for evil. There has indeed been no loss of rationality in them; but a thorough debasement of this faculty under the bias of a deliberate propensity towards wrongdoing. They have sinned against "light," *i.e.* against the full knowledge of good and evil. And there is no guarantee in the nature of the case that they will ever turn away from evil with advancing knowledge of God. The tendency is all the other way, so far as we can see. The very momentum and drift of their character carries them on in the same direction as that

[1] "Immortality and the New Theodicy," p. 102.

in which they have been travelling, and there is every likelihood that this process will go on for ever.

The same tendency is emphasised by the effect of sin itself on the human heart. Its power is cumulative. It eats into the very capacity of resistance against it, in which alone lies any hope of betterment. The more it is indulged in, the weaker grows the will, the stronger grow the propensities which urge the will to its committal. After a certain point in the lives of thoroughly confirmed sinners, we instinctively lose all hope of their redemption. We have no guarantee that the incidence of death will in any way alter this fact. All the analogies of life urge us to the belief that such persons will hereafter continue in their rebellion so long as they continue to exist. These two arguments will for ever make the doctrine of Universalism at best a dim and questionable hope.

With this qualification, we believe that it may be said that the best Christian thought "is tending, more or less consciously, toward enlargement of hope for the spiritual welfare of humanity, and that this tendency springs largely from the conception of God towards which the faith of the age has come."[1] Nor need there be any fear that this drift of thought will in the end tend to the confusion of moral distinctions, or a loss of the sense of the supreme issues of life. Those who might tend to indulge in unspiritual hopes because we can no longer teach them that death ends all probation must be warned that this does not make the solemn choices

[1] Clarke's "Outline of Christian Theology," p. 428. It is to be borne in mind, however, that this rapidly extending conclusion, "however logical and intelligible it may seem to be, has not by any means the same validity as a direct Scripture testimony" (Dahle, "Life after Death," p. 186). It is a spiritual presumption, and nothing more, however warmly it may be held. It is, at all events, the only form of the "Larger Hope" that seems tenable in the light of Scripture.

of life less significant, or that retribution is less certain. No real lightening of the shadows that lie in the path of the sinner can remove that certainty, or lessen its awfulness and grandeur. It is just as true as ever that the "soul that sinneth" must "die"; that continuance in evil ways tends to make reformation more and more difficult as time goes on; and that for the man who wilfully and knowingly perseveres in wrongdoing the hope of rescue is an ever-vanishing quantity. "Admit the possibility of returning to God hereafter, and even then the case is this: a man goes into the other life loving and choosing evil, to live there in sin, and to take the consequences; he thereby plans for nothing but to go on losing, dwarfing himself, hungering, thirsting, chafing, choosing to be as he is, and yet unsatisfied, loving his evil, and hating its fruit, growing away from the good, or else driven back to it from uttermost anguish of soul,—he can expect nothing but this till such a time as he is ready to take the step of penitence, faith, and loyalty to God, to which Christ is already calling him, and do, after perhaps ages of bitter experience, what he ought to do to-day. This is the brightest hope that any doctrine of future opportunity can hold out to a man who leaves this world rejecting grace in Christ and choosing a life of sin."[1]

III

We have now climbed up the last ridge of our journey. Standing on the vantage-ground we have gained, and shading our eyes as we gaze into the mist that overhangs the great future beyond the grave, we ask ourselves, What lies behind that curtain? Do the vague surmises and premonitions of our moral nature, the hopes and

[1] "Outlines of Christian Theology," p. 429.

fears which ever cast their shadow-pictures upon its dusky folds, give us any clue as to the real conditions of human life in the eternal world? We gain all our available ideas of the future state from our knowledge of our own nature and of God, under the guidance of the Bible, which defines the content of our faith on all matters dealing with the Unseen. But the references to the future state in the Bible are couched in highly figurative terms; the picture is painted with a very free hand; it is clearly intended to be suggestive rather than descriptive. And now that the old pragmatic methods of interpretation are out of date, there is need that this subject be dealt with from a point of view in keeping with the rest of our faith. The ordinary devout believer does not know what to think of Biblical teaching concerning the life after death, and consequently takes refuge in vague generalities or a pietistic trust. The vision of actual streets of gold and gates of pearl and walls of jasper have been consigned to the region of child-like imagination, and no one talks of physical torments and lakes of brimstone as the reward of the wicked; but nothing better has taken the place of these vivid if crude conceptions. The passage that best describes the sentiment of most Christians regarding this subject is this, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."[1] There is a certain gain in this attitude; it is at least honest, reverent, and dignified; and it is full of a noble trust. But there is also a great loss in it; for it leaves the mind *in vacuo*, and the heart hungering for a clearer vision. This results in a painful loss of that motive-power which we are clearly meant to draw from the contemplation of the future life; otherwise would it be

[1] 1 John iii. 2.

so often emphasised in Scripture? It is indeed one of the crying needs of Theology just now that a more positive theory of the conditions of the life to come should be formulated out of the teaching of our Lord and of His apostles. The soul cannot be permanently satisfied with a faith in solution. The eye loves land-marks in its vision; and the spiritual imagination requires at least some definite outlines on which it may rest. Without professing to do more than supply a few leading thoughts by way of help, let us make an attempt in this direction.

We begin with the subjective conditions as they are suggested in Scripture, interpreting its imagery in accordance with the freer exegesis of the present day, and by the aid of such light as is afforded by Evolutionary principles.

1. The Future Life must, in the first place, be one in which the moral gains and losses of this life are conserved, and made into the permanent possession of the soul. This is but another way of stating that the life to come is to be a true continuance of this. We shall preserve not only our bare identity but the full contents of personality after death. The New Testament everywhere appeals to us on this assumption. Death is spoken of there as a great change, but it is everywhere taken for granted that we shall take our whole self with us. We must leave behind the conditions of our physical life, but we shall not bury in the grave anything that is not physical. Our character, our moral achievements and failures, the sedimentary results of our experiences in this world, will follow us into the next. This is a fair inference from the Scriptural teaching. And it receives abundant reinforcement from that law of conservation which it is one of the great achievements of modern science to have established. The universe

to-day is the sum-total of the changes of the past. No force or energy is ever lost; it is being continuously transformed, and at the same time rigidly preserved. Similarly, the soul at every point of its career is the resultant of all the influences that have been acting on it from without, and all the reactions that have arisen from within. There is no reason in the nature of things why it should be otherwise after the incidence of the great change we call death. All analogy therefore confirms the assumption of Scripture that we shall begin the next life, so far as character is concerned, just where we leave off here.

2. The Future Life will carry on to their legitimate issue the moral processes of this life. Starting there where we leave off here, we shall continue to develop in a truly moral sense. There will be genuine responsibility and growth of character. At this point we seem to be touching fresh ground as compared with the faith of the past. The popular conception of the future, at least among Protestants, practically denies this position. As it has been put,—"On the one hand, the popular idea of heaven does not include the idea of genuine moral activity, with perpetual motive, volition, and responsibility; there is no thought of moral effort, but all is conceived as easy, and virtue as almost automatic. Moral strain has been endured once for all on earth; and heaven is a state in which the reward of successful endurance is enjoyed, in endless release from pressure and responsibility. On the other hand, the popular idea of hell equally excludes the idea of genuine moral activity. In that state all is conceived as retribution for sin already committed; there is no new action for which a man is responsible as he was in the earthly life, the period of genuine moral action with full results having ended, and given way to the period of retributive

consequences."[1] This really amounts to a denial of freewill in the life to come; and to deny this to humanity is to unmake it. The element of truth in the old view seems to be this: there will be in the life to come more effective safeguards for the preservation of virtue, a nearer vision of the Divine, with all the reinforcement of soul that this must bring with it, on the one hand; and on the other, there will not, so far as we know, be so many checks and hindrances, social and governmental, against the commission of sin, for the soul that chooses to make its home with evil. But we have no warrant for believing that the state of the redeemed will be one of absolute fixity, with no necessity for the exercise of moral conflict and heroism, nor that the condition of the rejected will be one of absolute fixity in evil; much less that there will be no spiritual battles and victories to win by those who pass into the other world in an unripe and undecided state of moral character. The self-directive element in the soul in virtue of which it is what it is, must be preserved for it, since it is of the very essence of personality. Obedience and disobedience to the Divine will must necessarily be voluntary in order to be real; if it is voluntary, there must be at least the possibility of withholding the one and committing the other. The only alternative is to hold that both in heaven and hell Man is *unmoral*; that is, he is no longer Man at all.

3. This, however, does not mean that there will be a perpetual flux in character. Even here there is a constantly increasing tendency to develop along fixed lines of conduct; in the future state we may well believe that this tendency will become emphasised. Holiness means, in ever-increasing measure, a happy acceptance of the Divine will, and a more perfect ability

[1] Clarke's "Outline of Christian Theology," p. 418.

to fulfil it. Moral depravity, on the other hand, implies a progressive alienation from the Divine will, and an increasing tendency to shirk its demands. This doctrine does not necessarily imply that in the next life, any more than in this, there will not, in some cases at least (we might hope in an immense number of cases), be a real transformation of character. But it does seem to carry with it, both here and yonder, a possibility of reaching a state of fixity so absolute at last that further change is almost inconceivable. Of some good men we say that they are utterly incapable of certain forms of wrongdoing; they have finally eradicated any tendency in that direction; and the converse also seems true. Character tends to develop a momentum, which, after a certain point, carries the will irresistibly with it in certain directions; beyond that point, there is no change to be expected unless it be progress in the same direction. When a certain stage has been reached, we may well believe that the solemn verdict "He that is unrighteous, let him be unrighteous still; he that is filthy, let him be filthy still"[1]—is the simple, stern statement of a doom as final as it is self-chosen.

4. There is a sense in which our environment in this world is fixed for us. We are born into definite surroundings for which we are not responsible; and our life is spent under conditions of outward circumstance that are determined by forces largely independent of our will. But there is another sense in which we are creators of our environment. As we have already seen,[2] it is one of man's *differentiae* that he can to a very large extent alter the conditions of his physical and social life Civilisation is but another name for the growth of a vast artificial environment into which the primitive conditions of life have been gradually

[1] Rev. xxii. 11. [2] See above, p. 52, etc.

transformed. Individually, we have a still larger power of making our own environment out of the materials furnished by this larger one. We can choose our friends; we can surround ourselves with objects of beauty and opportunities of culture; we can create a home-life which contains a true foretaste of heaven. Mentally we can make our home with what is noble and true and stimulating to the highest faculties. Or we may reverse the process. Spiritually we have almost unbounded power to clothe the soul in its own atmosphere of good or evil, and to make ourselves centres of heavenly or demoniacal influence. The philosopher who lives among the lofty abstractions of the intellect; the poet who revels in a paradise of his own imagining; the statesman whose life is a tissue of worldwide ambitions and projects; the saint who is at home with all things fair and holy: these, equally with the rogue and the villain, the sensualist and the debauchee, are instances of the way in which men even here can live in a world of their own creation. Character indeed is, in the last resort, the spiritual vesture which the soul weaves round itself from within, out of materials provided from without; a fair and stately garment of splendour and praise, or a fiery Nessus-shirt of degradation and torment.

This inner, self-wrought environment we shall take with us into the next world; and there, we may presume, this faculty for a self-created environment will come to its full exercise. Both the restraints and difficulties that limit our control over our environment here will be removed yonder. We shall go "to our own place"[1] —that is, the place or condition appropriate to the state of the soul. That environment will partly be our inheritance from this world; partly it will be the result

[1] Cf. Acts i. 25.

of fresh and to us unknown conditions. This thought brings home with fresh emphasis the solemn issues of our life on earth, and the incalculable importance of enfolding the soul in a spiritual vesture of thought and feeling and will that shall tend ever more and more to eternal blessedness and endless growth in holiness.

V

THIS brings us to ask—Have we any light on the objective conditions of the Future Life?

1. We are taught in the New Testament that the future state will be one of righteous retribution, of reward and punishment.

There is of course a true element of retribution in this life also. The laws of the world work on the side of righteousness, and no man can transgress them without sure and terrible loss. It is undeniable, however, that in the New Testament special prominence is given to the retributory element in the future life. And this retributory factor has distinct reference to the moral character which we have gained or missed in this life. "We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."[1] There is nothing said in Scripture about the question whether the moral life on the other side will be visited with reward or punishment on its own account; this however is consistent with the principle everywhere followed to reveal nothing of that life except in its particular bearings on our conduct and character here. And there is no fact more clearly and constantly emphasised than this—that there will be a closer connection between

[1] 2 Cor. v. 10.

goodness and reward, evil and punishment, than exists here. This is one of the safeguards of faith. In this world, good and evil do not apparently come to their own. The wicked man seems to escape many of the consequences of his misdeeds; his punishment is largely privative at best; the objective results are veiled under a confused mass of extraneous accident. And the good man is often treated with terrible injustice; his plans are defeated, his highest purposes come to naught, he is martyred for the truth to which he bears heroic witness. When faced with this problem, we sometimes comfort ourselves with the trite remark that goodness is its own reward; but that does not do away with an instinctive inward conviction that the moral laws of the universe ought in the nature of things to be objectively as well as subjectively vindicated. And so, while our Lord and His apostles do not give any warrant to the crude idea that Heaven and Hell are mere contrivances for trimming the balance of this life, nor teach us that there is not a real punishment for sin, and a sure recompense for virtue, on this side of the grave, they do teach us unmistakably that there will be a more obvious and objective relation between moral acts and their issues there than we find here. This is only another way of saying that there will be a complete adjustment of the subjective and objective results of character in the life to come. All that is confusing and baffling to our faith in the present life will be cleared away; God's righteousness will be vindicated, man's deservings will be brought home to him, each in an unmistakable and convincing manner. This is the teaching of the great Parable of Judgment.[1]

2. The same fact is sometimes put another way. It is revealed in Scripture that in the future state means

[1] Matt. xxv. 31-46.

will be provided which confer blessedness on the good and misery on the wicked.

In other words, the issues of character will be vindicated not only to the moral sense, but to the spiritual sensibilities. For the soul that has craved for the highest good, that has striven after the highest ideal, that has sought its rest and peace in God, that has fought earnestly on behalf of the Divine Will and Truth, there will be satisfaction and joy beyond the capacity of our present faculties to measure or imagine.[1] The New Testament is rich in suggestions, in images, in allusions, in ecstatic climaxes of feeling, having for their subject this blessedness of the saints in Heaven. Their lot is one of unspeakable felicity. It is described as a "shining forth as the sun"[2]; as a manifestation "in glory with Christ"[3]; as a "crown of life,"[4] of "righteousness,"[5] of "glory"[6]; as a "treasure in heaven"[7]; as an entering into the "joy of the Lord"[8] and unto the "spirits of just men made perfect"[9]; finally, it is to be a transformation into the image and character of the Saviour who has "brought life and immortality to light by His Gospel,"[10] "who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory,"[11] and the vision of whom "as He is" will cause us "to be like Him"[12] who is the "Firstborn of all creation."[13] There is thus an abundant compensation for the storm and stress through which those have had to pass who have striven to do the will of God in sincerity.[14] For this end Jesus has "gone

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 9.
[2] Matt. xiii. 43.
[3] Rom. viii. 17; Col. iii. 4; 2 Thess. i. 10.
[4] James i. 12; Rev. ii. 10.
[5] 2 Tim. iv. 8.
[6] 1 Peter v. 4.
[7] Matt. vi. 20.
[8] Matt. xxv. 21.
[9] Heb. xxi. 23.
[10] 2 Tim. i. 10.
[11] Phil. iii. 21.
[12] 1 John iii. 2.
[13] Col. i. 15.
[14] Rom. viii. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 17.

to prepare a place for them,"[1] that there may be "exceeding joy" "before the presence of His glory"[2]; at which prospect the tried and distressed saints of God are invited "to rejoice with exceeding joy."[3] All these and many other passages which might be cited warrant the faith that in Heaven the unsatisfied hunger of the soul in this life will be fully met, and that the happiness and felicity of the redeemed will be something of which we can but dimly conceive here in terms of the highest earthly experiences, such as "song," "triumph," "victory," "peace," "light," and "abundance of life."

Equally unmistakable are the hints thrown out in the New Testament of the misery of those who are "lost" because they have finally rejected the offer of salvation in Christ. Their state is described as one of banishment from the presence of God,[4] as perdition,[5] as an existence spent in "blackness of darkness,"[6] in the company "of the devil and his angels,"[7] in "the lake of fire."[8] They are to "drink of the wine of the wrath of God,"[9] are to be delivered over to "wrath and tribulation and anguish,"[10] and to pass their existence under the eternal condemnation of God.[11] Nothing can be imagined more terrible than the array of passages dealing with the misery and anguish of those who are finally impenitent; their doom is not only to be deprived of the good which is the portion of the redeemed, but to be visited with positive inflictions of sorrow and shame that leave earthly language far behind in its attempt to describe them. We may tone down these expressions to the utmost limit; there yet

[1] John xiv. 2, 3.
[2] Jude 24: cf. Psalm xvi. 11.
[3] 1 Peter iv. 13.
[4] 2 Thess. i. 9.
[5] Phil. iii. 19.
[6] 2 Peter ii. 17; Jude 13.
[7] Matt. xxv. 41.
[8] Rev. xx. 15.
[9] Rev. xiv. 10.
[10] Rom. ii. 9.
[11] Mark iii. 29; John v. 29: cf. James ii. 13 and Jude 6.

remain enough suggestions of conscious retribution to warrant the most pressing appeals to sinful men to "flee the wrath to come."

3. Finally, the life to come is revealed as a state of reward and punishment *in exact accordance with personal merit.*

It is to be one of carefully adjusted reward for the good. This is a feature of the future state that has not been sufficiently brought out in the text-books of theology and in the preaching of the Gospel. The result is that most Christian believers have fallen into the notion that, once Heaven is won, it will be the same Heaven for all, and that there is to be no difference in the felicity of the redeemed. If this were so, then the carefully graded estimates of character we instinctively form of one another in this life would have no application in the great Hereafter, and a great fund of incentives to strive ever more and more after perfection would be taken out of the working motives of the Christian life. If all the good are to be equally blessed in Heaven, does it not tend to make all but the very finest types of character satisfied with a poor standard of Christian living? This crude idea, however, is not according to the teaching of the Bible. The notion has arisen partly out of a failure to distinguish between salvation and reward. We are *saved*, according to the New Testament, not by our merits or "works," but by the "free grace" of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. We appropriate this salvation by "faith,"[1] which as an act of spiritual receptivity is the same in all, and brings the same benefit for all. But we are *rewarded* according to our *works*.[2] In the Kingdom

[1] Eph. ii. 8.

[2] 2 Cor. v. 10, where Paul is speaking to those already within the Kingdom of God.

of Heaven, whether in this life or the next, our place is settled by the quality of our service. In the "money parables" of our Lord are given the principles according to which this apportionment is to be made. There are three sources of inequality among men—that of endowment, that of industry, that of opportunity. The first problem is dealt with in the parable of the "talents."[1] Here the servants start with unequal endowments, and two of them do their best with their capital, with the result that each exactly doubles it, while the third makes no attempt to do anything at all with his. In the award, the first two have an equal recompense, while the third is banished from the presence of his master. The second problem is dealt with in the parable of the "pounds,"[2] in which with the same initial capital there is a difference in the results attained, the first doubling the earnings of the second, while the third once more does nothing. Here the third is again rejected, and his pound is given to the first as being the most deserving; whose reward is made double that of the second, because of his extra diligence in service.[3] The third problem is dealt with in the parable of the "pennies,"[4] commonly called that of the "husbandmen in the vineyard." Here the key to the situation is to be found in verse 7 ("because no man hath hired us," and "whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive"). This case is clearly one of unequal opportunity. Those who had been "all the day idle" were so through no fault of their own, having had no call for their services. As soon as they were hired, they accepted service, and did their best. In the issue they had an equal reward with those who had had a better oppor-

[1] Matt. xxv. 14-30, vv. 21, 23.
[2] Luke xix. 12-27.
[3] Verses 16, 18, 20.
[4] Matt. xx. 1-16.

tunity.[1] The triplet of parables thus contain a guarantee that no initial disqualification, whether of gifts or of opportunity, will stand in the way of a just apportionment of reward in the Divine Kingdom, but that unequal diligence and conscientiousness in God's service will vitally affect the amount of that reward. Our work will be weighed "according as a man hath, not as he hath not." The same principle shows itself incidentally in other sayings of our Lord, and reappears elsewhere in the Epistles. We are in the hands of a just Master, who will do that which is right with all in His service, and has a watchful eye for all purity of motive and earnestness of spirit.

Similarly, it is taught that there will be gradation in the punishment of the lost. The notion that those who fail to attain the redemption offered to all in Christ will be plunged into a common depth of woe is as foreign to the teaching of Christ and His apostles as the idea that the reward of all grades of His people will be identical. "It is often alleged against the doctrine of Eternal Judgment," writes Prof. Salmond in his work on the "Christian Doctrine of Immortality," "that while sins differ through all possible grades of difference, it seems in the end at least to represent them as punished alike. But it is the very burden of a large part of the teaching of Christ and that of the apostles, that this final retribution will not be the same for all."[2] He tells us, for instance, that it will be more "tolerable in the day of judgment" for Sodom and Gomorrah, for Tyre and Sidon, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum, in view of their difference in enlightenment.[3] In another discourse, He tells us

[1] Matt. xx. 10: cf. verse 15.
[2] Page 670.
[3] Matt. xi. 20 24.

that some of the disobedient will be punished with few, some with many stripes[1]; which means that penalty will be in exact accordance with opportunity and desert. All that Jesus says about the Judgment implies that the same even-handed justice will be seen in the punishment of wrongdoers, as in the reward of the righteous; and that if it is a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," and that all sin must be punished as it deserves, God is to be as just in His dealings with the wicked as He is with the good.

These, we believe, are the lines along which we are led by the teachings of Scripture on the great question of Human Destiny. It is true that the picture lacks definiteness; only the broadest outlines are given us. But it is a picture full of scope, and inspiration, and warning. It justifies us in giving a larger place than is customary nowadays to the Future Life as a source of motive-power in this life. And when we read the imagery of the Bible in the light of the Evolutionary science of human nature which has made such rapid strides of late years, we find nothing which is not capable of being translated into the moulds of modern thought. It all harmonises with the idea that Man in this state of existence is still a being "in the making." If he is the crown of Nature's vital processes so far as his physical constitution is concerned, he bears in his organisation infallible marks that he is meant for higher things than can be attained within the narrow margin of existence permitted to him here. His highest powers are incipient. His spiritual affinities reach out towards the unseen; there is nothing in this world that can adequately satisfy them. He has a hunger for righteousness, an ideal of goodness, a deep-seated craving for holiness, in violent contrast with his present oppor-

[1] Luke xii. 47.

tunities of attaining these objects of desire. Apart from a further opening for moral effort and victory, his spiritual career is a drama that ends in an anticlimax. Weary with the struggle against evil, tormented with a perpetual sense of failure, eager to take up on a higher plane the spiritual endeavours which here bring so little sense of triumph, his eye turns with unspeakable longing to the land beyond the grave for the scope denied him in this life. And what he dimly sees there under the revealing light of the Gospel is enough to quicken his pulses to a "lively hope" that he has but to trust in God and do his best in order to attain a sure and everlasting reward. In this higher state the moral tangle of this life will be unravelled, the issues of character will be unfolded, the brightest dreams of the soul will be realised. There will be rest, victory, fellowship, service, progress, and attainment in all that is most desirable and noble; the "open vision" will take the place of surmise and cloudy uncertainty; and all the germinal powers of the soul will be expanded to their full capacity. In view of what we have said in this study of the Future Life, we are able to rest on the thought that before us lie unimaginable glories if we live the life, and walk in the Way, and do the Will of God humbly in this world; and that behind the curtain of death there are "things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which have not entered the heart of man, whatsoever things God hath prepared for them that love Him."

"Far and wide, though all unknowing,
Pants for Him each human breast,
Mortal tears for Him are flowing,
Human hearts in Him would rest.
Thirsting, as for dews of even,
As the new-mown grass for rain,
Him they seek as King of Heaven,
Him, as Man for sinners slain."

Chapter V.—Some Final Problems

Some "Residual Facts"—Why was Line of Revealed Truth so narrow?—At least this was consistent with Law of Evolution—Relation between Christianity and Ethnic Faiths—The Missionary Motive—Three Reasons for Evangelising the whole World—Conclusion.

LET us gather up the fragments that remain.

There are one or two recurrent and obstinate difficulties in theological thought which, we believe, if not altogether resolved, are at least much mitigated, when the subject is viewed from an Evolutionary standpoint. They are "residual phenomena" that lie outside the scope of current religious formulae; "awkward facts" which the orthodox thinker can only meet by an appeal to unquestioning faith, where he does not judicially ignore them as insoluble problems. Such inconvenient facts exist for scientific as well as religious thinkers, though scientists often talk as though they were the exclusive heritage of theology; and it is generally through the persistent pressure of these facts that scientists have been forced to revise their theories, so paving the way to some larger generalisation which has marked a real advance in thought. It is not impossible that the pressure of these residual difficulties may similarly open the way to a wider and truer outlook on the facts of the religious life, and so accelerate the emergence of the troubled soul out of the murky twilight into the light of the "perfect day."

I

ONE of these perplexing facts is the apparently narrow channel which has marked the course of revealed truth through the ages, and the very circumscribed area covered by its light at the present day.

It is one of the fundamental postulates of the Gospel that it is meant for the salvation not of a few chosen individuals, or of a select nation, but of the whole world. Whatever may have been the case with Judaism, Christianity is a Universal Religion ; it is for Mankind as a whole. The purpose of the Incarnation embraced the world within its scope ; the type of manhood revealed in Jesus is universal ; the laws of the Kingdom of God are all-commanding, and are equally applicable to men of all races, stages of civilisation, and grades of culture ; the sacrifice of the Redeemer is efficacious for sinners of every condition ; there is no let or hindrance to the ample invitation of the Cross. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,"[1] is the final command laid by the departing Christ upon His followers. "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked ; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent : inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained ; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead"[2]—this is the principle that lay at the very heart of the great "apostle of the Gentiles," and passed like a fire from him into the lives of all the primitive preachers of the Gospel. It is this burning conviction, reawakened in modern times, that is at the root of all missionary effort. There is

[1] Matt. xxviii. 19. [2] Acts xvii. 30, 31.

salvation for all in Christ; there is true salvation in no one else; "for neither is there any other name under heaven wherein we must be saved."[1]

This being the position forced, by the clear and unmistakable will of its Founder, on all who accept the Gospel, the question recurs with ever-increasing emphasis, how is it that the knowledge of this great message has been kept within such narrow limits? Arguing from the probabilities of the case, we might have expected that a full opportunity of making the Great choice would be granted to all men. Souls, *qua* souls, surely have a right to know that which is the one channel of eternal life for all. It would seem but reasonable that no one of the men for whom Christ died should be in a position to say at the close of his life: "I have not had a chance to accept the Gospel; no one has preached the Word of Life to me. I die, and so far as this life at least is concerned, I have had no opportunity of knowing and loving my Saviour." Instead of this, what has been the course of revealed truth, and how far has it been proclaimed to the race for whose universal salvation it was unfolded? It has been, not an all-embracing atmosphere for all men to breathe, nor even a broad river of influence flowing through every land, but a narrow and contracted stream running athwart the centuries. Instead of the universal morning, breaking simultaneously over wide spaces of the earth, and beating for entrance at the window of every soul, there has been a fitful and uncertain breaking of the clouds of spiritual ignorance and sin, here and there, only to close back again for long intervals into a shadowy and uncertain twilight; instead of a complete and convincing revelation, given in the early ages of the world, and preserved from eclipse and deadly error, we

[1] Acts iv. 12.

look back upon a slow, age-long process of fragmentary revelation, "by divers portions and in divers manners," given to patriarch, poet, prophet, and priest; and it was not till the world had been groaning and travailing for countless generations for the great boon, that the fulness of the light burst upon men in Jesus Christ, and the Blessed Word came and "tabernacled" in the flesh. Since then the spread of the Gospel has been left to the ordinary channels of intercommunication between man and man. There has been no directly supernatural means employed to bring the light of truth to all eyes, and the message of the mercy of God to all ears. Only according as the followers of Jesus Christ have been fitfully faithful to His last command have the treasures of the faith been placed within reach of the heathen. The mystery is all the greater when we remember that there has been a real outpouring of spiritual energy from the Unseen along the narrow line that marks the historical pathway of the truth, and a rich upspringing of the "fruit of the Spirit" in lands where the Gospel was known.

Perhaps we are not even yet in a position to give a complete account of this difficult problem. We know how, in other ages, it was attacked, and a solution attempted. The doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty, combined with that of Election, settled the question in the eyes of such as were in a position to accept such a rough and ready answer. There are, however, few if any thoughtful minds who are any longer satisfied to believe that God's arbitrary selection of individuals and nations here and there is the last word to be said about the mystery of redemption. Such an explanation seems to us to take away more than it gives. It seriously interferes with the notion of God as a Moral Being, and emasculates His character of the finest attributes

accorded to Him in the Gospel. The Christian conscience has outgrown the possibility of ever falling back on the old Calvinistic position; to state that, nowadays, is to reject it.

Without professing completely to dispel the darkness in which the subject is enshrouded, we can at least say that the actual method of revelation as presented in the Bible is exactly what we might have expected on an Evolutionary theory of Religion. The story there unfolded follows a strictly Evolutionary method. The line of spiritual, like that of physical development, began with small and almost imperceptible beginnings. Both proceeded from little to more by gradual and insensible stages. From the germ to the blade, from the blade to the flower, from the flower to the ripe fruit—this has been the story. In both processes the Creator seems to have had little care as to the amount of time taken by the intermediate stages. The course of each has been intermittent so far as the steps of visible advance were concerned. The line of Evolution in both has been a "narrow one." Its course has been fettered by all manner of hindrances. Its final triumph was secured only in virtue of a selective process of elimination by which the most worthy elements were preserved, and the temporary integuments of error were gradually sloughed away as the ages went on. There have been "back-eddies" in the stream of Revelation as in the stream of life; but the line of "progress of the whole" has been jealously guarded and rigidly preserved. Just as the first germ of life, coming we know not whence (unless it be from some other more fortunate and more advanced planet), implanted itself in the soil of this earth, and forthwith set about transforming its new habitat, turning the fields of death into an ever-advancing kingdom of life, till at last the wilderness blossomed

as the rose, and the desert became a fruitful garden; so the first faint spark of Divine truth and life was dropped into the uncongenial soil of humanity, and forthwith began that course of troubled but glorious life which issued at last in the Perfect Man, and gave promise of a "new earth and a new heaven wherein dwelleth righteousness." It is the same story, with a difference; "first the natural, then the spiritual"—the lower but prophesying in the humbler fields of organic life the lines of expansion and the glorious vistas of progress fulfilled by the higher in the tangled but teeming subsoil of the human heart.

It has been said that Nature, in her Evolutionary processes, has expended her chief care, as it were, on the perfection of the species, and has recked little "of the single life." Individuals have been allowed to perish in countless millions in order to provide a sufficiently broad platform for the advance of the race. The course of Revelation would seem to suggest that this is so also in the spiritual sphere. Its course has been so slow, so local, so intermittent, that the interests of the unnumbered generations who have come and gone in the meantime seem to have been forgotten. Even the Chosen Race, at any given time in its history, had only a fragmentary glimpse of the vast ranges of saving truth. And at the present time, only a fraction of the race has any knowledge of the Christian Faith. How is the balance of inequality to be trimmed? How are the rights of individual souls to an equal chance of redemption to be safeguarded? What we have said about the probability of a future probation for those whose opportunity has been incomplete in this life meets, we think, the pressure of this problem; and apart from some such compensating theory, we do not see how that pressure can be lifted at all.

II

THERE is a second problem which has been pressing increasingly on the consciousness of Christendom, and calls for some kind of solution, even if it be but a tentative one. In what relation does Christianity stand to the great Ethnic Religions?

The old sure and short way, of relegating them to the limbo of outworn and ignorant inventions, no longer satisfies us. The more we study them, the more we find proof that they are a genuine outgrowth of spiritual life, the result of earnest and persistent attempts to answer the riddle of the Universe. No great religion was ever founded by a Pretender. The Ethnic Prophets were men of real and in many cases exalted spiritual genius. They were akin to Moses, and David, and Isaiah, and John the Baptist. Many were characterised by a saintliness and beauty of life that fills us with admiration. And whatever may be said of the grievous errors with which their presentation of the truth has been intermingled, no one who accepts the Christian Faith can fail to realise that in the great religions of the world there is much ground in common with that Faith. Much of the teaching of Jesus Himself is to be found imbedded in the religious systems of the Orient. And those who live among the civilised heathen tell us that they come with a shock of surprise occasionally upon types of character of rare elevation and beauty among the followers of Buddha, and Lao-Tse, and Confucius. What are we to think of this common ground of truth enjoyed by these religions? How are we to class these exalted characters that meet us here and there among the low and degraded types of heathen life?

It is still held by some thinkers that the residuum of

truth lying hidden beneath the puerilities and moral refuse of the Ethnic faiths are the true survival of a Primitive Revelation granted to the undivided human race in the earliest stages of its career. Mr. Andrew Lang's recent work on the "Making of Religion" opens up a possibility that this theory, long discredited even among theologians, may yet prove of real scientific value.[1] There is, however, another not unlikely explanation, to which we may briefly call the reader's attention.

It would seem that the forces of spiritual life have been always and everywhere at work in the hard and unyielding soil of humanity. God has not been far from any of His creatures, if haply they might find Him. But the conditions favourable to the emergence of the truth have not obtained everywhere, and thus it has been caught only in flying glimpses and isolated flashes of light. In all religious systems there have been such glimpses, and they have been none the less Divine because they have been afterwards obscured and almost quenched by all manner of evil accretions. But in one and another of these religions the element of error has overbalanced that of the truth, and made it impotent to fulfil its saving work. They have thus sunk gradually under the weight of accumulated superstitions and immoralities, and become either lifeless and stationary systems, or mere landmarks registering the failures of the human soul to attain the knowledge and life of God. But in one line of religious thought and aspiration there has been so much Divine vitality, and so favourable a soil for the growth of religious ideas and life, that in spite of all the contrary forces—the story of which has been unfolded in the Old Testament—there has been an ever-widening stream of revealed truth, which, growing more and more spiritual as the ages went on,

[1] See esp. p. 331, footnote.

gradually provided the conditions for the embodiment of the sinless life, and for the unfolding of the saving purpose of God, in His Son Jesus Christ. *The story of Christianity is, from this point of view, the story of the survival of the fittest among religions.* It is not necessary, in order to honour it as Divine, to deny all Divine elements in every other religion. Whatever was or is true in them is of God, for all truth is of and from Him. The reason why He revealed Himself so much more perfectly in the Hebrew religion and race, is simply that the necessary conditions were not provided along any other line of historical and ethnic evolution. There was something in the constitution of these "God-intoxicated" Hebrews which made them a suitable channel for the unfolding of the perfect will of God. This is why, we may be sure, they were the favoured or "chosen" nation, instead of the Greeks, or the Romans—so superior to them in other directions. Just as the Greeks showed a matchless aptitude for embodying the principle of beauty in undying forms, and so became the medium whereby the finest artistic and intellectual possibilities of the human mind were brought to perfect expression; just as the Romans were gifted with the faculty for government, and so developed the most wonderful system of laws the world has ever seen, which are still studied by legislators as containing the finest concrete embodiment of their science,—so the Hebrews were the medium of the noblest spiritual religion the world has ever seen. There was no arbitrary element in the choice of this people for the supreme honour of furnishing the channels of revelation. They were chosen because their national temperament was specially sensitive, and their spirit peculiarly plastic to the touch of the Most High; they had the religious genius; and so, in spite of their perpetual lapses into

sin and shame, they responded more and more to the severe discipline to which they were subjected as the instrument of the revealing Spirit of truth and grace. To them, therefore, the world turns still for the satisfaction of its spiritual cravings, the embodiment of its ideals, the fulfilment of its immemorial hopes. For it was from among them that the Light to lighten the Gentiles first burst forth upon the world, whose redeeming truth will shine like the "lightning which cometh forth from the East and is seen in the West." So shall it be in "the coming of the Son of Man."

There is another aspect from which the ethnic religions may be viewed in relation to Christianity. Whether they contain the *disjecta membra* of a primitive revelation once given to the race as a whole, or are the results of sporadic efforts to penetrate into the spiritual laws and mysteries of existence, it is unquestionable that they constitute a great process of preparation for Christianity, both historically and spiritually. Unreasoning zeal has sometimes spoken of heathen religions as though they were an unmitigated hindrance to the work of the missionary and the evangelist. There are at least two ways in which these mixed faiths contribute to the extension of the universal faith. First, in their subjective effects on the spiritual nature, in the sensitising of the soul to the touch of religious ideas, in the awakening of the whole man to the influences of the unseen order. It matters not, so far as this point is concerned, that any particular form of belief is of a low and degraded type, and that it has become associated with immoral habits: the soul that has become sensitive enough to hold even an erroneous view of religion is by that very fact equipped with spiritual aptitude for the truth; the rest is a matter of education and enlightenment. Secondly, as there is confessedly some

relic or germ of truth in all the ethnic religions, this is enough to furnish a foothold for the first principles of the Gospel, a *pou sto* on which to rest the lever of persuasion and lift the whole man into the light and joy of the truth. However great may be the inertiae of heathen religions as *systems* against the impact of Christianity, and the difficulty of getting their professors to give up a low for the highest form of religion, there is no doubt of their value as educators of the soul, in the sense just mentioned, as the subject of redemption. Perhaps in days gone by this aspect of the case has not been sufficiently appreciated by most pioneers in missionary endeavour, but it is now largely acknowledged and acted upon, greatly to the advantage of both teachers and taught.[1]

III

AND this brings us to the last difficulty on which the train of thought we have been following throughout this book helps to throw some light. It relates to the question how far it is in accordance with the enlarged outlook of modern times on the world that we should attempt to convert heathen peoples to faith in Christ.

There is one point of view from which all missionary effort seems to be inconsistent with the Evolutionary theory. It looks like an interference with the laws and constitution of things. The fact that every nation has

[1] See Andrew Lang's "Making of Religion," especially chapter on "High Gods of Low Races" (pp. 187 ff.). "It is certain," he says in an earlier chapter, "that savages, when first approached by curious travellers and by missionaries, have again and again recognised our God in theirs" (p. 183). Livingstone bears a testimony corroborated by most missionaries to the existence of the principles of what is called "Natural Religion" among savage tribes. "There is no necessity to tell even the most degraded of these people of the existence of God, or of a future state, the facts being universally admitted ("Missionary Travels," p. 158).

a religion of its own, which is the outgrowth of its very life, and has been an integral part of its historical development, would suggest that it must suit its constitution and temperament better than another and alien religion, however superior this may be; nay, its very superiority must make it to that extent unsuitable to the needs of a less evolved and more primitive people. It is an attempt to interfere with the natural course of ethical and religious evolution. If indeed a long and painful historical preparation was needful for the emergence of Christianity as a complete and perfect faith,—a preparation that reaches far back into the dim dawn of human life and thought,—does not this suggest, *ex hypothesi*, that a similar preparation is necessary for its proper *acceptance* by the nations which have been outside the current of historical Christianity? It looks like a violent effort to override the order of Nature that we should try to impose so high and elevated a faith on those who (1) have historic faiths of their own, and (2) are by that very fact disqualified to profit by a form of religious belief thrust upon them from outside.

Our reply is threefold.

1. We cannot leave these nations to themselves, to develop according to the laws that have hitherto governed their life and growth. The nations called Christian are everywhere pressing hard upon all other nations; Western civilisation in all directions is disintegrating both the customs of savage nations and the more stable civilisations of the East; and it is everywhere being shown that in this general break-up of old and effete orders there is an imminent peril. For where our civilisation penetrates without our religion, it is invariably disastrous in its effects. It never fails to destroy the confidence of subject races in their own

creeds and customs, without furnishing anything in place of their sanctions and restraints. The result is everywhere to be seen in the way in which heathen nations neglect our virtues and emulate our vices. The advice sometimes given to the missionary, therefore, to leave the people to whom he ministers to their simpler faiths, is beside the mark. These faiths are inevitably going; soon they will be gone; and the question presses—What then? If history proves anything, it proves that a nation without a faith is a doomed nation; that it cannot hold together; that it inevitably decays and dies. From this point of view alone, then, there is a tremendous responsibility laid upon us. The impact of our civilisation is breaking up the fabric, and undermining the foundations, of the ethnic religions. Without religion of some sort, nations must perish. Therefore we must see to it that we give something in the place of what we take away; and that something must be the Christian Faith, or it will be nothing.

2. The objection that the less evolved peoples require a long historical training in order to fit them to receive the Christian religion, is one that has been already put to a sufficiently crucial test to enable us to estimate its value. *Solvitur ambulando.* It is unquestionably true that the first contact of missionary influence with certain types of savage life has been disastrous, where it has not been absolutely unfruitful. It is also true that, in the case of some converts to the faith, there has been a tendency to part company with certain elemental virtues, such as truthfulness, obedience, and industry. An inordinate self-conceit occasionally does duty for self-respect, and a tendency to elaborate an effusive pietism replaces the simple moralities. This was surely inevitable; it would be a miracle were it otherwise: do we not, indeed, still find abundant samples of such

types even in civilised religious circles? Taking, however, the broad results of missionary effort all over the world, we have conclusive proof that Christianity can lay hold of men in all stages of savagery and animalism and transform them into new creatures; that there is no kind or quality of civilisation which it is not capable of permeating and ennobling; and that when older faiths and social systems are tottering to their fall, it is the one thing which can preserve and redeem individuals and races from certain decay and dissolution. From the wilds of Africa and Canada, from among the teeming millions of India and China, from the hordes of "primitive" savages in the islands of the sea and the deserts of Central Australia, from New Guinea and Labrador, comes consentient testimony that Christ can lay hold of men's hearts, renew their lives, and save them unto eternal life. The calendar of the saints has been enriched during the last century with names drawn from every land and clime and type of humanity. It has been proved, indeed, that wherever we can find a *man*, be he ever so degraded and sinful and bestial, we see a possible subject of the Kingdom of Heaven, who has but to open his heart to the message of the Cross to find himself capable of escaping from the bondage of sin, and of entering into the glorious liberty of the children of God. In a word, Christianity has abundantly proved during this last century that it is, in the strictest sense of the term, a Universal Religion. It is therefore the bounden duty of those who have proved its efficacy to redeem them in their personal lives, to send it forth in all directions to fulfil its redeeming work in the world.

3. Even this does not sum up the whole argument. The offer of Christ to sinful men wherever they can be found is not the offer of an alternative religion to them, in the sense in which Hinduism and Taoism and

Confucianism are religions. It is the offer to men of *the secret of life*, of something that will cleanse them from all that hinders and defeats their spiritual natures, of something that will enable them to realise their true selves, and become men in the true and full sense of the word. We do our Master little honour when we place Him among a group of Teachers competing for the acceptance of men. He is not one of many Founders of religions. He is the source and fountain of all, in so far as they have caught a prophetic glimpse of His truth, and anticipated something of His spirit, and given a scattered hint here and there of His secret. He is the truth, the type, the saving grace of which they faintly and vaguely dreamed; the Desire of all Nations, the Crown and Essence of Humanity; the Saviour of the World, who by the loftiness of His Teaching, the beauty of His Character, the sufficiency of His Atoning Sacrifice, is able to save to the uttermost all who will come to Him and trust in Him. He has thus commissioned His followers to go and "teach all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." It is the Great Commission, the Marching Orders of the Church, the Magna Charta of Humanity; and in the due performance of this commission lies the hope of the whole world, and the guarantee that, instead of falling deeper into the pit of Evil over the edge of which Man toppled in the Fall, Man will find his way back into the half-forgotten pathway towards the ideal life, and make the "ASCENT THROUGH CHRIST" to Heaven and God.

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